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2003

# THE NATIONAL HONORS REPORT VOL. XXIV, NO. 1, SPRING 2003

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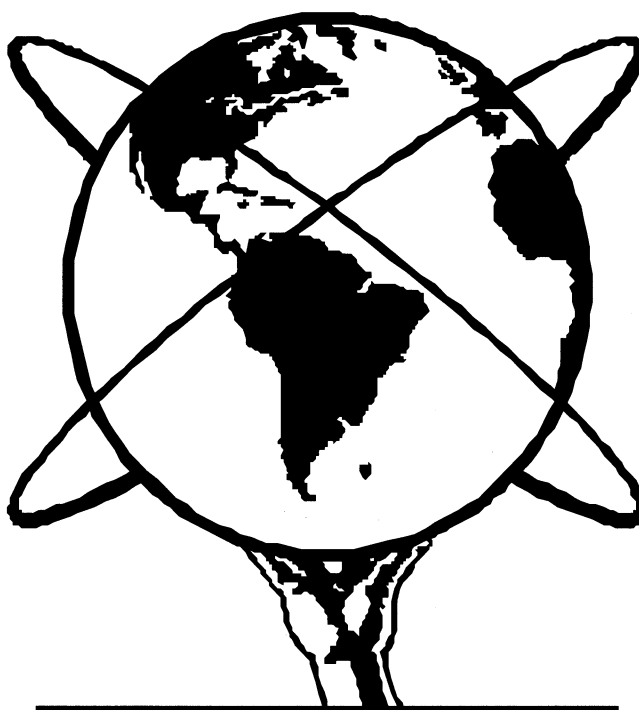
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# THE NATIONAL HONORS REPORT

A PUBLICATION OF THE NATIONAL COLLEGIATE HONORS COUNCIL

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## The Geography of Honors

THE NATIONAL HONORS REPORT

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The National Collegiate Honors Council (NCHC) is a professional organization composed of administrators, faculty, and students dedicated to undergraduate honors learning. The nation-wide institutional membership in the NCHC includes both public and private, large and small, two-year and four-year colleges and universities.

The NCHC provides professional and institutional members with information about the latest developments in honors education, encourages the institutional use of learning resources, fosters curricular experimentation, and supplies expertise and support for institutions establishing or seeking to maintain, rework, or evaluate honors programs. It also institutes educational programs of its own.

Iowa State University serves as headquarters for the NCHC office of Executive Secretary/Treasurer Elizabeth Beck. All communications regarding subscription, membership, address changes, and other matters of business should be sent to her at the NCHC office, Iowa State University, 2130 Jischke Honors Building, Ames, IA 50011-1150; phone: (515) 294-9188; fax: (515) 294-2970; email: [nchc@iastate.edu](mailto:nchc@iastate.edu). To learn more about the NCHC, visit the home page at <http://www.nchchonors.org>.

*The National Honors Report* seeks material concerning any aspect of undergraduate honors education, such as recruitment, retention, curriculum, teaching, or learning. Deadlines are Feb. 10, May 10, July 10, and Nov. 10. Contact Margaret Brown, Editor, 100 Village Del Prado Way, St. Augustine, FL 32080; email: [honors-editor@excite.com](mailto:honors-editor@excite.com).

*Layout by Gayle Barksdale, Radford University, Radford, VA 24142*

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For those long-time members of NCHC, I am sad to report that Vishnu Bhatia passed away on January 16, 2003. For those of you who might not have known Vic, he was a moving force in the development of NCHC and we all have benefitted from his leadership. If you need more information, you might contact Peggy Perkins, Principal Assistant at Washington State University Honors College, (509) 335-4507 or perkins@wsu.edu.

-from *Elizabeth Beck, Executive Secretary/Treasurer*

•To **join** the honors listserv at George Washington University, email <listserv@hermes.circ.gwu.edu> with the following command: <sub honors (put your name here)>. The listserv will automatically pick up your email address.

•To **post** to the list after subscribing, mail your message to <honors@hermes.circ.gwu.edu>.

•If you have **problems with the listserv itself**, contact the webmaster at <uhpom@gwu.edu>.

•To **remove your name** from the listserv, send the command <unsub honors your name> in the first line of the message box to <listserv@hermes.circ.gwu.edu>.



# ***THE GEOGRAPHY OF HONORS***

*Rosalie C. Otero*

## **Think, Believe, Act on a Himalayan Scale**

**I**n thinking about my remarks today, I wanted to tie them to the conference theme “Peaks & Valleys,” to the NCHC, and to honors education. I did quite a bit of thinking. Mountains, after all, are ponderous and weighty, like honors matters. And what of valleys? Well, you can’t have one without the other. It’s the variety of geography that makes the world interesting. I thought about the more traditional thinking of peaks and valleys, comparing them to the ups and downs of the NCHC, to the ups and downs of honors education, perhaps even to the ups and downs of this past year. But since I’m basically an optimistic person I much prefer to speak about the strengths and challenges of our Honors peaks and valleys rather than the ups and downs.

Climbing mountains is a natural metaphor for success in reaching goals. Each mountain presents unique challenges, and rising to these challenges will lead to the summit and from there to even greater mountains. So, in my talk today I want to exhort all of us to think, believe, and act on a Himalayan scale. What you don’t know, the mountain will teach you. If you feel unequal to the climb, remember that much of the knowledge you need to reach the summit can only be learned on the ascent. To surmount a challenge, or to climb a mountain you must define your objective, make the critical transition from preparation to action, have courage when crossing difficult terrain, weather the storms well, and focus relentlessly on the summit. Then you will feel somehow that your own faith has been renewed, that there are dreams worth following, causes worth pursuing, that people can devote their lives to something larger than themselves and grow in heart and mind and grace until they become almost as high as the mountains they love.

Having lived most of my life in New Mexico, I am well aware of peaks and valleys. I grew up in the beautiful Taos valley with mountain peaks at the edge of every horizon. The tallest mountains in New Mexico tower majestically in the northeast. To the southwest are horizontal waves of high mesa desert and the thick shadow of the Rio Grande Gorge.

Taos County has five ecosystem ranges. You can hike 650 feet down the inverted ecosystem of the Rio Grande Gorge and horseback ride above the timberline of 11,000 feet the next day. Wheeler Peak, the highest peak in New Mexico, is at 13,161 feet. In New Mexico, the town markers don’t list population; instead, they give the elevation, often a larger number. I suspect that’s true of Utah and much of the West. We do certainly get a sense of peaks and valleys in Salt Lake City.

*Rosalie Otero, President of the NCHC 2001-2002, delivered these remarks at the 2002 NCHC National Conference in Salt Lake City, Utah, in her Presidential Address. Dr. Otero is honors program director at the University of New Mexico. In addition to her many contributions to the NCHC, Otero edited a column on “Women and Minorities” for the *NHR*. In the Winter 1997 issue (Vol. XVII, No. 4, 20-21), she wrote “Tenure in Honors” after earning tenure at UNM.*

Several years ago, a friend and I decided to climb Wheeler Peak. We drove to the edge of the ski valley and hiked to the foot of the mountain. We spent the night in a pup tent and the next morning set off on our climb with enormous backpacks full of items for every conceivable ordeal we might encounter. We carried everything from sleeping bags and our tent to a first-aid kit, flashlights, insect repellent, a Swiss Army knife, water, and freeze-dried food. We climbed higher and higher following the faint lines of ancient foot paths. We imagined ourselves akin to Sir Edmund Hillary climbing Mount Everest. We were prepared for anything: life threatening falls on rock and ice, avalanches, high altitude diseases, grizzly bears, and hypothermia. Although the climb was challenging, the most dangerous condition we encountered was wind. But as we struggled to keep our footing on the narrow path and tried to maintain our balance against gusts of brisk, but by no means, frigid winds, we believed ourselves as direct descendants of such adventurers as Marco Polo, Christopher Columbus,

Lewis & Clark, Perry and Scott and Amundsen: explorers who drove themselves to do what no one had done before, "because," in the famous words of Sir George Mallory, "it is there."

We followed the path eroded by so many human feet that had climbed before, up and up the winding path, past isolated piñons and solitary junipers. Once we reached the top, the view was magnificent with Blue Lake, sacred to the Pueblo people, below and an open vista of mountains and valleys. Silence permeated the whole area. Our sense of accomplishment was awesome. Like many before us, we wanted to leave some remnant, some reminder that we had been there, but we didn't want to mar the rocks by sketching our names on them and we hadn't brought a flag. I happened to have a silver dollar and my companion had five weathered and worn pennies, so we buried them under rocks. Who knows, perhaps some later climbers discovered our loot and bought themselves a cup of coffee!

I'm sure you've all had similar adventures: climbing mountains or knolls or hills. Perhaps you've played "King of the mountain." Some of you may have visited mountains in other countries like Machu Picchu in Peru, Kilimanjaro in Africa, or Mount Fuji in Japan. Perhaps you enjoy more tame outings like walks in your neighborhood park. But I believe all of you can understand the great attraction to the physical environment.

Geography captures the imagination. It stimulates curiosity about the world and the world's diverse inhabitants and places, as well as about local, regional, and global issues. By understanding our place in the world, we can overcome parochialism and ethnocentrism. Geography focuses attention on exciting and

interesting things, on fascinating people and places, and knowing about them lets us make better-informed and, therefore, wiser decisions.

Valleys, on the other hand, are primarily places where most of us live, where we form communities be they villages or towns or cities. It's in the valley that we build our homes and families and friendships. It is in the valleys that we establish our schools, arts centers, and businesses. Valleys are social places whether they be Texas cattle ranches, distinct urban neighborhoods, stately old New England towns, or relaxed seaside cities. Even in this technological society that is reshaping the landscape of contemporary communities, the valleys are still the places where these businesses settle. The Net has a fundamentally different physical structure, and it operates under quite different rules. The connections are not necessarily just with our physical neighbors, but with those we can reach

through the worldwide computer network. Of course, because of the escalating information economy, we find the

*"Geography captures the imagination."*

centers of wealth, technological prowess, and financial power in such communities as Jackson Hole, Wyoming and Park City, Utah rather than just at such centers as Wall Street, Hollywood, and Silicon Valley.

Our sense of self is intimately entwined with that of place. Who we are is often inseparable from where we are. Places are human creations and the geographically informed person must understand the genesis, evolution, and meaning of places. Place influences how people think about who they are, because their identity is inextricably bound up with their place in life and the world. Personal identity, community identity, and national identity are rooted in place and attachment to place. Knowing about other places influences how people understand other peoples, cultures, and regions of the world.

Space is the environmental stage upon which the drama of geography is played out, and places are particular points on the environmental stage where the action occurs. In this respect, there is a parallel with the approach of history. History is concerned with understanding the temporal dimension of human experience (time and chronology). Geography is concerned with understanding the spatial dimension of human experience (space & place). Imagine the tragedy of September 11 without the specific locations: Manhattan, Washington, D.C., or a field southeast of Pittsburgh.

People's lives are grounded in particular places. We come from a place, we live in a place, and we preserve and exhibit fierce pride over places. How many of you are from the University of New Mexico? The University of Alabama at Birmingham? BYU? University of Utah? Oklahoma State University? Chapman University?

I'm sure that I could name all the institutions represented here today and get the same response from each. We do exhibit fierce pride over places. We need an understanding of why places are the way they are, because it can enrich our own sense of identity with a particular place and enable us to comprehend and appreciate both the similarities and differences of places around our own community, state, country, and planet.

In honors, we can find parallel metaphorical mountains and valleys. This is the heart of honors: coming to understand what the wonders of our existence, of our work mean. Our honors programs and colleges are at once mountains and valleys. They are places where we can gain perspective and where we form community. The classes and activities related to honors challenges us to be open to new ideas and interested in a variety of disciplines. We make friends. We form our own values. It's a place where we foster discourse, exchange, and negotiation. Equally important, moreover, honors programs and colleges foster a sense of personal affiliation and belonging.

Honors programs and colleges are places that enable students to take an active, questioning approach to the world around them, and to ask what, where, when, and why questions about people, places, and environments. One of my students is currently in South America and wrote the following which I think is typical of students who expand their borders:

"After a few days of exploring Lima, Peru, I took an eight-hour bus ride rising from the Pacific coast to the city of Huaraz. A few days later I joined a group of people who were going to trek Cordillera Huayhuash. Catalino, our mule driver, raced forward to secure a great view of all five peaks. Once we reached the spot, we could only be awestruck and humbled by their magnitude. Who used to look at these mountains? What did they see and how did they pay their respects? The diversity of this planet astonishes me: and I haven't scubaed yet. Where are the stars brighter? Tonight I pray on the mountaintops." Chris's wonder is palpable.

We often tend to think of honors as a lofty place of learning: an elevated classification of higher education. I think it comes from a universal need to extend ourselves. Rents are higher on the top floors of apartment houses. Property is more expensive if located in the mountains. People almost always prefer to live, if not in the mountains, then surely with a hilltop view. Flat country tends to be oppressive.

We seem to find pleasure in climbing: from the thousands of tourists who climb the winding stairs leading to the crown of the Statue of Liberty, to the rare but universally admired adventurer whose life-long ambition is to reach the top of Mount Everest. Many people go hang-gliding and ballooning and, for the same thrill in reverse, free-falling from airplanes. The

highest paid circus performers are generally those who can perform daring stunts high in the air, without reliance on a safety net. The rest of us must be content with the more ordinary pleasure of soaring through the clouds in a jet airplane.

Climbing takes internal as well as external forms. The urge to stand marks our earliest assertion of an independent self, vertical images are no doubt among our earliest abstractions. More than imagining actual feats of climbing, building, or flying, we tend to impose vertical imagery upon our thinking about our lives. Songs urge us to climb every mountain, to reach for the stars, and to hit the heights. More prosaically, we associate the "goal" of success with a climb upward:

"He's going to make it to the top."

"She's on her way up."

"She's tops in her field."

"How high can I go in this corporation?"

"Well, my dear, looks like you're over the hill!"

Vertical images, at their best, serve the interest of humanity by driving people to tackle one seemingly impossible task after another. The Gothic cathedral, for example, was designed in such a way that it could have remained standing without the use of mortar between the stones. Think, too, of the myriad tall buildings

***"We often tend to think of honors as a lofty place of learning: an elevated classification of higher education. I think it comes from a universal need to extend ourselves."***

around the world and explorations outward via satellites and space shuttles and the Hubble telescope. But vertical images can also dishearten, can provide a profound sense of failure. "I'm way down here; my classmates are way up there."

The flowchart of university structure is usually vertical with one executive, the President clearly in command at the top with other administrators, faculty and students filtering down to the bottom. The divided terrain at our universities and colleges around disciplinary departments further reinforces the crumbling of the curriculum by dividing knowledge into distinct fields, even though scholarship, learning, and life have no such artificial boundaries. In addition, there are programs and departments, majors and clubs that are considered better than others. To believe the chart is sometimes to believe one has an inferior position even though common sense may indicate it is preferable to those above it. How do our honors programs and

colleges fit into that structure when our mission is to be inclusive, interdisciplinary, innovative? We make every effort to cross boundaries and make connections. We make every effort to coordinate expectations for learning vertically through the years and horizontally across subjects and institutions. We make every effort to hold ourselves, and our students to high standards of intellectual work.

Typically, honors programs and colleges represent the best of the traditions that we in academia wish to pass on to our students. And, honors programs and colleges, by definition and by tradition, enroll those we consider to be the best of our students. From the *Peterson's Guide to Honors Programs & Colleges* edited by Joan Digby, "we learn that honors by nature is a cooperative enterprise. It is a sequence of courses designed specifically to encourage independent and creative learning. While honors programs and colleges have many different designs, there are typical components. They all provide an environment in which students

feel free to talk about their passionate interests and ideas." Just glancing at some of the mission statements in the *Guide* we find phrases like the following: "The Honors Program at.....is designed to enrich highly motivated students"; "to give students an opportunity for them to pursue their particular intellectual interests"; "to challenge and stimulate"; "to enhance the university experience"; "to develop habits of mind that enable persons to be lifelong learners, creative problem solvers, and participatory citizens in a democratic society"; and "to broaden their intellectual horizons."

We must give all our students the substance, that is the content, the information that helps them understand the complexity of this nation and the world, its values, its conflicts and its potential, so that they can move to the significance of their education. It is our hope that students leave the university or college with more than a degree.

Shouldn't the hallmark of an excellent student be the ability to engage the complexity of ways of being and viewing the world? And shouldn't excellence be judged by the ability to express simultaneous connectedness and distinctiveness, the simultaneous abstract and concrete, the simultaneous difference and sameness of things even when they appear to be opposite?

Places are parts of earth's spaces, large or small, that have been endowed with meaning by humans. They include continents, islands, countries, regions, states, cities, neighborhoods, villages, rural areas, and uninhabited areas. They usually have names and boundaries. Each place possesses a distinctive set of tangible

and intangible characteristics that helps to distinguish it from other places. Honors programs and colleges, too, should be spaces that have meaning, that possess a distinctive set of tangible and intangible characteristics that helps to distinguish honors education from other forms of education. This, of course, includes significant attention to the effects of racism, ethnocentrism, classism, sexism. When we teach our courses based on a single aesthetic: the Anglo-American that presumes universality and presents only the works of white males and a few white women: we are distorting reality and hampering our students' ability to understand and negotiate this society. We are living only in the mountains and ignoring the valleys or living only in the valleys and ignoring the mountains. We contribute to the continuation of ignorance about one another and of prejudiced and bigoted behavior. We perpetuate stereotypes and truncate the potential of all our

students by maintaining the fragmentation of the human experience and encouraging its subsequent divisiveness. In

***"For the honors ideal, though it is shared by all of us, is realized in each one of us."***

this era of globalization we need to respond ethically to the idea that we all live in one world.

Honors programs and colleges need to make sure that we give our students an education of lasting value. It has to be an education that promotes the kind of learning students needs to meet emerging challenges in the workplace, in a diverse democracy, and in an interconnected world. It has to be an education that develops mental agility, intellectual power, and understanding of the world's variety. It has to be an education that inculcates an ethical grounding and empathy for others.

Today's students come from an extraordinary diverse array of national, racial/ethnic, and socio-economic backgrounds. We may have students, and certainly some faculty from the Silent Generation, the generation that lived through the Great Depression and World War II. We have students and faculty that are Baby Boomers, who lived through the McCarthy Hearings, Civil Rights, and Vietnam. Many of our students are probably from Generation X. The seminal events of this generation include, 1971 when Intel's first chip developed, 1972 when the first e-mail management program came about, and a time when extensive corporate downsizing began. Most traditional age students are from Generation Y (1982-1998). They are also known as the "Net Generation" or the "Digital Generation."

The Silent Generation people are practical, dedicated, respectful, and self-sacrificing. The Baby Boomers are the largest group with 77 million. They are a group that's driven; they challenge authority and believe

everyone should start at the bottom and pay their dues. They redefined roles, and they like lots of elbow room. The Gen Xers are skeptical, unimpressed with titles and rank, and believe that work should be assigned according to competence not longevity. Gen Y's values include optimism, volunteerism, inclusiveness and collective action. They have been using computers since pre-kindergarten. They are E-learners and about 75% of their moms work outside the home. Many of them are into "Extreme Sports" and expect frequent feedback. This is the generation that brought snowboarding to the Olympics. They value speed more than attention to nagging detail: they've had spellcheck all their lives, after all.

Some of our students may lack college preparatory curricula, and we may also notice new enrollment patterns with increased part-time enrollment, multiple-institution attendance, and perhaps even online and distance courses. This diversity-enriched environment brings great vitality to our programs and colleges, but also places significant demands on faculty knowledge and skill. The missive is that we can't rely on the "tried and true" of the good old days. We need to invent and reinvent our honors programs and colleges to meet the needs of our diverse student bodies.

Just as in education, modern developments in machinery and equipment have produced major changes in the technique of exploration. Aircraft and vehicles are in many cases replacing the human legs; oxygen bottles are giving new strength to air-starved lungs in the thin air that clothes the giants of the Himalayas and other lesser mountains; and radio communication and cell phones have removed the loneliness from the most desolate land. But despite all this I firmly believe that in the end it is each person individually who counts. When the going gets tough and things go wrong the same qualities are needed to win through as they were in the past: qualities of courage, resourcefulness, the ability to put up with discomfort and hardship, and the enthusiasm to hold tight to an ideal and to see it through with doggedness and determination.

The National Collegiate Honors Council is an organization of innovation. We do not reject our traditions, but we are willing to adapt to changing circumstances, when change we must. We are willing to suffer the discomfort of change in order to achieve a better future. Let each person do his or her part. If one

person is unwilling to participate, all of us are going to suffer. For the honors ideal, though it is shared by all of us, is realized in each one of us. It is a way of dedication, hard work and courage.

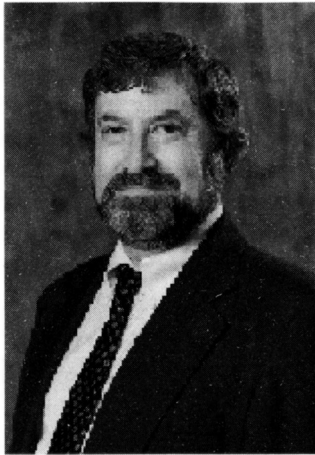
Ultimately, then, the oldest fundamentals of place - sense of community, identity, history, and faith - remain important and are increasingly *the* critical determinants of success and failure.

Edward Abbey wrote about his time as a park ranger in a place called Arches National Monument near Moab in southeast Utah in his book, *Desert Solitaire*.

If Delicate Arch has any significance it is, I will venture, in the power of the odd and unexpected to startle the senses and surprise the mind out of their ruts of habit, to compel us into a reawakened awareness of the wonderful: that which is full of wonder. A weird, lovely, fantastic object out of nature like Delicate Arch has the curious ability to remind us - like rock and sunlight and wind and wilderness - that *out there* is a different world, older and greater and deeper by far than ours, a world which surrounds and sustains the little world of people as sea and sky surround and sustain a ship. For a little while we are again able to see, as the child sees, a world of marvels. For a few moments we discover that nothing can be taken for granted, for if this ring of stone is marvelous then all which shaped it is marvelous, and our journey here on earth, able to see and touch and hear in the midst of tangible and mysterious things-in-themselves, is the most strange and daring of all adventures.

So, in the spirit of my birthplace and of the conference theme, may all of us partake in strange and daring adventures. May all of us climb mountains and enrich our valleys. May our honors programs and colleges and our national organization provide some foundation and framework to help each of us strengthen and affirm our own values. May they provide structures and resources necessary to sustain our planet, our communities and each of our lives. May all of us leave some memento, some vestige that we have inhabited this planet - even it's a mere half dollar or a few pennies under a rock. *rdc*





*Bob Spurrier*

## **Earl Brown: Colleague, Leader, and Friend**

**I**t's difficult to believe that it has been ten years since Earl Brown took over the reigns as Editor of *The National Honors Report* and six years since he relinquished his editorial responsibilities to begin his service as NCHC Executive Secretary/Treasurer. Both the calendar and Earl's retirement from Radford University (and his not seeking another term as Executive Secretary/Treasurer last fall), however, indicate that time passes whether we like it or not. Earl has been a valued colleague, an excellent editor of the *The National Honors Report* and Executive Secretary/Treasurer, and a personal friend to so many in the national honors community that a few words are in order to mark this milestone in his life and in the life of NCHC. In addition to my own thoughts, I am including some comments of three colleagues who worked closely with Earl during their terms as national officers of NCHC.

It was my pleasure to serve with Earl while I was a member of the Executive Committee and during my four years as a national officer of NCHC. What stands out most in my mind is Earl's unfailing dedication to NCHC and to its members. Had he been an engineer instead of an English professor, no doubt he would have been a civil engineer because he consistently sought to build bridges—to individual members, to the regional honors councils that are loosely affiliated with NCHC, to the National Association of African-American Honors Programs, and to many others. A key ingredient of Earl's leadership was his ability not only to listen, but also to hear what people were saying. As Rosalie Otero, Immediate Past President of NCHC, notes: "He initiated regional visitations by national officers. We attended regional conferences and generally proposed a session on the relationship between the region and NCHC. Earl attended several professional meetings organized by NCHC partnerships (Phi Kappa Phi, Phi Beta Kappa, Penn State Honors symposium). He also was present at all pertinent committee meetings during the year—Executive Committee, Finance Committee, Honors Evaluation, Committee, etc."

Joan Digby, a past president of NCHC, put it this way: "Members of NCHC were bound to feel connected to our organization when they heard Earl's warm voice answer the telephone, 'This is Earl Brown, how can I help you?' The offer of help was always his first thought in answering the phone, and I am certain that NCHC has grown considerably as a result of his genuine thoughtfulness and desire to build bridges. A traveler by nature and inclination, Earl has come to know every regional honors organization and he is a friend to all."

Under Earl's leadership the National Headquarters took on new dimensions, and Earl always made sure that we knew that theirs was a team at the national office—not just an Executive Secretary/Treasurer. Gayle Barksdale and Liz Cassell were true professionals in every sense of the word. They were friendly, competent, and dedicated, and they cared. I can't count the number of phone calls I made and e-mail messages I sent to Earl, Gayle, and Liz (and no doubt

*Bob Spurrier is a former NCHC president and long-time member of the Executive Committee. Dr. Spurrier is now dean of the Honors College at Oklahoma State University. Spurrier always encourages his honors students to run for a place on the Executive Committee and the Honors College is quick to offer the financial support the NCHC requires for student members.*

they stopped counting a long time ago), but without fail they responded promptly and positively. Gayle took on the task of laying out the national conference program booklet (quite a relief to recent conference chairs) in addition to all of the other tasks that fell to her, including developing an attractive and user-friendly web page. The accounting assistance that Liz provided during the year that I was responsible for the national conference was extraordinary. Along these lines, Rosalie Otero commented, "Earl certainly created a template for an NCHC headquarters which can be imitated with office space and a professional NCHC staff. His office provided a great deal of assistance to conference planners including the web site and program. Gayle has been super."

Hew Joiner, past president of NCHC, had this to say about Earl:

Earl Brown has taken pride in pointing out to visitors to NCHC headquarters at Radford University the license plate on the back of his Subaru, which reads simply, "NCHC." It is an appropriate badge for the car of a man who has lived, waked, slept, and eaten the welfare of NCHC during the six years of his tenure as Executive Secretary/Treasurer.


My earliest memories of Earl Brown go back nearly twenty years, when Earl and I were both apprentice honors directors and began crossing paths at annual SRHC conferences. Earl caught my attention early on with his gregarious and outgoing manner, his delicious and ready sense of humor, his sincere interest in what other people thought and what other people were doing. But what impressed me most was his clearly genuine interest in students and his recognition that the essence of a truly meaningful honors experience lies in making honors teaching something extraordinary. Over the ensuing years I have come to relish my conversations and contacts with Earl and he has been a dependable fountain of fresh and interesting ideas for the enrichment of honors programs at the point where it most matters, at the level of the development of the individual honors student. (In recent years Earl's workshops dedicated to honors teaching have established themselves as signature fixtures at both SRHC and NCHC conferences.)

NCHC has been very well-served by the small succession of remarkable individuals who have been elected our Executive Secretary/Treasurers over the

years. Certainly Earl Brown has left a uniquely personal stamp upon that office during his two terms. Earl has been at great pains since becoming EST six years ago to seek and to implement new ways in which to make the national office a source of active assistance to member institutions and to keep the membership well informed of all NCHC activities. These efforts have been largely successful. Perhaps as significant, Earl's initiatives have helped to set a tone for the relationship between the elected leadership and the membership at large which I hope will become a permanent legacy for our organization. As NCHC moves into a period of complex change, we need to be careful to retain the priorities and the values which guided Earl Brown during his long career in honors.

In the 1996 fall issue of *The National Honors Report*, when he was a candidate for his first term as Executive Secretary/Treasurer, Earl stated that if elected he would strive: "(1) to provide combined services and vision to NCHC; (2) to make sure NCHC is more inclusive in its membership; and (3) to assure the vitality, continued growth and fiscal health of NCHC." Even in difficult financial times (and without a dues increase for many years) Earl certainly has met the goals he set for himself as Executive Secretary/Treasurer, and he deserves credit for a job very well done.

Giving credit to Gayle Barksdale and Liz Cassell, along with Earl, for the efficient and friendly operations of the National Headquarters over the last six years is something that is completely appropriate—a point that Earl has made many times himself—but there is another person to whom credit is due. When Earl gave up the editorship of *The National Honors Report* to take on the duties of Executive Secretary/Treasurer, he was ably succeeded in that capacity by his wife Maggie. All of us who have worked with Earl and Maggie over the years know they are a great team. Fortunately for NCHC, Maggie has agreed to continue to edit *The National Honors Report* from their retirement venue in Florida. While Earl is combing the beaches, Maggie still will be toiling in NCHC vineyards. If I know Earl as well as I think I do, he will be there to assist Maggie—and any of the rest of us who undoubtedly will continue to seek his wise counsel and guidance about honors education.

For all that Earl has done to benefit NCHC, a heartfelt "Thank you" and best wishes for every joy in the years ahead. 

## Where are they now?

Gayle Barksdale has assumed a new job at Radford University after six years at the NCHC National Office at RU. As administrative assistant, Gayle created and continually updated the NCHC website, chaired the Membership Committee, compiled the data for the Membership Directory, and simplified many of the forms that were mailed from the national office.



Gayle is now the Administrative Assistant to Dr. Donald Anderson, chair of the Department of Counseling and Human Development at Radford University. She is thrilled to continue working with students while remaining at Radford University. Gayle will still be a part of

NCHC in her job doing the layout for *The National Honors Report*. The NCHC will miss her many contributions to our organization.

Liz Cassell, for six years the financial manager of NCHC, has just completed the closing of the books for the year 2002. Ms. Cassell is to be commended for her loyal service to NCHC and to her thoroughness as an accountant. She created all of the spreadsheets printed in these pages for the last six years to let members know when and where every penny in the organization has come from and gone to.



Liz has earned all of the glowing recommendations provided to her by many NCHC members. Although she has interviewed for many jobs, she has turned down several; as of now, she has accepted no permanent position. No one can thank her enough for her commitment to the NCHC.

### NCHC Publications

- Beginning in Honors: A Handbook* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed., 1995) by Samuel Schuman. The nuts & bolts of honors: budgets, recruitment, administrative concerns, curriculum design, model programs & more. For new administrators.
- Evaluating Honors Programs: an Outcomes Approach* (1990) by Jacqueline Reihman, Sara Varhus, and William R. Whipple. The how's of evaluating.
- A Handbook for Honors Administrators* by Ada Long (1995). Everything & more. Includes descriptions of models of honors administrators.
- Honors Programs: Development, Review, and Revitalization* (1991) by C. Grey Austin. A useful guide useful in every stage of an honors program.
- Honors Programs at Smaller Colleges* (1999, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.) by Samuel Schuman. For colleges with fewer than 3000 students.
- Honors in the Two-College* (1983) by the Two-Year College Committee. How to implement honors at two-year schools. Includes some model programs.
- Place as Text: Approaches to Active Learning* (2000) by Bernice Braid and Ada Long. Information and practical advice on the experiential pedagogies developed within the NCHC during the past 25 years.
- Teaching and Learning in Honors* (2000) by Cheryl Fuiks and Larry Clark. Presents a variety of perspectives on teaching and learning.

*Preston N. Williams*

## **Religion: A Factor of Importance in Honors and Public Life**

**I**t is a pleasure and honor for me to speak to you this morning. It is also challenging and intimidating. You are the pride, not only of your parents, your professors and teachers, your college and universities, but also of your state and nation.

You are America's honors students, and America we are told is the world's only superpower, so you too must be super in some ways. That's why I am both pleased and frightened. Your invitation suggests that I too must be good or I wouldn't be here. But since you too are exceptional that means you can be very discriminating in respect to anything that I may say.

I am not however without some experience in this sort of encounter. Several years ago (in the 1980s) I had the experience of helping to inaugurate an honors program at Spelman College and lived in their Living and Learning Center. This, in addition to membership in several honors societies and thirty years of teaching at Harvard, enables me to relate to what you are experiencing and seeking to improve in your meeting this week. I remain however still pleased and challenged. I want to take this opportunity to say a few words about how you might improve honors work by adding authentic and intellectual religion to it.

When we think of honors programs as academics and students, we think at the least of grades. To be in an honors program means that we have achieved a bit better and perhaps are more concerned about our learning what we are taught in college and university. It may mean even a bit more—greater exposure to lectures, books, research opportunities, travel, cultural enrichment.

As important as all these things are, this understanding of honors strikes me as a new and much impoverished understanding. It belongs to the recent history of American education where test scores, IQ's, and grades dominate our thinking about what constitutes learning and wisdom.

As significant as these things are, it is well worthwhile restoring some older understanding of honor to present day programs. If these understandings are present already in your program, it would be well to make sure that they are emphasized more than or as much as grades and scores on national and professional examinations.

The *Second Edition—Unabridged Webster International Dictionary of the English Language* informs us that honor is esteem, respect paid to worth, and that worth can or does encompass excellence of character, high morals, integrity, uprightness, and trustworthiness. Honor carries with it the notion of a good person who is faithful to his or her social obligations. You are exceptional because of duties as well as abilities.

Honor does possess some qualities that do set one apart, that do elicit esteem and admiration from others, but those qualities are more than a narrowly defined superior intelligence, higher examination marks or a privileged type of study and learning.

*Dr. Preston N. Williams of the Harvard Divinity School, Harvard University, delivered this speech, "Religion: A Factor of Importance in Honors and Public Life", at a plenary session during NCHC's annual conference held in Salt Lake City in 2002. Williams is the Houghton Research Professor of Theology and Contemporary Change at Harvard University. We thank him for sharing this speech with those unable to attend the conference.*

When in the past one thought of one's willingness to die to preserve one's honor, one had more in mind than IQ's and test scores. Honor was instead related to a standard of conduct appropriate to one's station in life. Honor required a knowledge of and practice of what is right and just and good. This understanding of honor needs, I believe, to be an aspect of every honors program.

I mention this understanding of honor as the goal of our programs and personal achievement because much in our domestic life as a people suggests its absence. Shooting and violence occur too frequently in the best schools in our suburban neighborhoods, and scandals mar too much the life of our most prominent companies and Wall Street financial institutions. Columbine, Enron, Anderson, WorldCom, Tyco, Salomon-Smith Barney—the administrators and leaders of these institutions were people of keen minds and academic brilliance but they were not always persons who were freed from greed, unprincipled and criminal behavior. Honor societies and programs should be cognizant of these facts and act to strengthen a person's motivation to be a good individual and to make a valuable contribution to his/her vocation and society as well as to succeed.

Our programs and individual acts need to cultivate a broad understanding of honor in order to remind people that honor includes high moral character and the fulfilling of social obligations.

I speak of this broad conception of honor not only because I believe it to be the most accurate conception but also because this understanding of honor underscores its ethical and religious dimension. Both religion and ethics like honor are characterized by a striving after the good life. Religion is perceived to be capable of eliciting our best self from us, by binding us to God,

or that force, or energy, or power that is within us and within the universe. Ethics similarly directs us in our efforts to discern the right and the good and to avoid doing harm. In the broad conception of honors these orientations are present and inform our motivations to learn and achieve at the highest level possible. They provide moral boundaries for knowledge.

***“It is important therefore not only to add a dimension of religion and ethics to honors programs and the personal pursuit of achievement, but it is also equally important to study religion in a manner that unmasks both its flaws and virtue.”***

Thus, I prefer and recommend that you pursue the broad understanding of honor in your programs and yourselves. In doing so you will create a place for religion and ethics because they too are concerned with the right and the good.

Unfortunately this complementary relationship between learning, religion, and ethics is not always recognized or encouraged. These troublesome and disturbing events on our high school campuses and in the corporate world attest to that. Consequently we must all be advocates for religion and ethics and a broad understanding of honors.

Yet just as honors can be improperly understood so too religion and ethics. For many religion and ethics are seen as opposed to learning and achievement. Unfortunately and too frequently the perception is true. Religion and ethics can be and often are anti-intellectual. There is much evidence for this view and

one should not deny it. Let me try to characterize this evidence by reference to two well-known historical events. One took place in the Middle Ages and has imprinted itself indelibly upon Western Civilization and scholarship, and the other took place in 1925 in Dalton, Tennessee and has etched itself on American scholarship.

Most of you are familiar with Galileo's effort to convince his world of the truth of the Copernican theory that all planets including the earth revolve around the sun. You know also the attempt of the church to silence him and many others by its use of the Inquisition—an office for the systematic pursuit of heresy and the punishment of heretics by the church acting with the state. In spite of the truth that all have come to know about the movement of the earth and heavenly bodies, the church did not admit its error of Judgment in respect to Galileo until 1992. Well after men and women had walked upon the moon and lived in space capsules launched from earth. Because of this action by the church and other acts like it, many see religion as anti-intellectual.

One of the best known examples of this religious anti-intellectualism to take place in America occurred at the Scopes Trial in Dalton, Tennessee where a jury upheld a law that declared it to be illegal to teach the theory of evolution in public schools. The law, by the way, was valid there until 1967 and in some other states laws akin to this still exist. This I submit is another illustration of the tendency in religion to be anti-intellectual.

Religion and ethics ought to be linked to a broad conception of honors if the brightest and best are going to be encouraged to study them and to use them to contribute to the betterment of

humanity. Yet as these illustrations remind us, religion like “honor” can be misunderstood and mistaken. It is important therefore not only to add a dimension of religion and ethics to honors programs and the personal pursuit of achievement, but it is also equally important to study religion in a manner that unmask both its flaws and virtue.

After all, our founding mothers and fathers came to this land to escape an oppressive form of religion as well as the tyranny of King George. We need to keep that legacy alive. Remember also that this fact is linked and is supported by another key aspect of our national life, the separation of church and state. And let us not forget that the separation of church and state exists as much for the good of religion as it does for the good of the state.

Study of religion and ethics is necessary then for the promotion of authentic religion as it is for the nourishment of honors. Religion must be studied for us to know what it truly is and to know how to adjust religion to our duties as scholars and citizens. Unless we believe that religion is inherently anti-intellectual—and some do believe that—it is incumbent upon us to study religion and seek to discern the true from the false.

There are then two forms of honor and two forms of religion and ethics. The narrow form of honor that excludes religion and ethics and the broad form that includes religion and ethics. The inauthentic, anti-intellectual form and the authentic intellectual form.

It is our task to be able to discern all forms of honor, religion, and ethics, and promote that form which yokes broad honor with authentic intellectual religion and ethics. This activity needs honor students and programs, and it requires thought and reflection and is more needed today than it has been for a long while, even though

it is now more difficult and complex. This is due to the fact that religion in America is more diverse than it has ever been before and because religion is no longer seen as simply private. Religion has emerged as a serious dimension of domestic and international public policy.

For a long while public religion has been reduced to the meaningless shibboleths of popular evangelists, athletes, and politicians. This is no longer the case. These profiteers now are joined by a public and policy makers who recognize religion to be intimately involved in serious public issues of justice.

The civil rights movement under Martin Luther King, Jr. was the first to inaugurate large scale participation by religious lay persons and clergy in the formation of public policy based upon religious beliefs. Their central belief was that God created all persons as equal in dignity and worth. The women’s movement, the anti-Vietnam and environmental movement continued the intrusion of religion into the public sphere. Progress in the biological sciences and the revolution accompanying the new knowledge has caused many religious persons to differ in respect to their views and policy concerning abortion, gender roles, models of the family and sexual orientation. All of these persons agreed, however, that the religious dimension of the several concerns needed to be decided by a public policy. All of these issues have provoked public debate and have elicited a response from lawmakers, judges and policy advocates.

Religion consequently has become an important element in the decision-making process, and it has acted to make normative judgments upon government and to seek enactment of law. It is important therefore for honors

persons and groups to know religious traditions and their orientation to these matters as well as the facts of biology and the other sciences.

But what is it, we might ask, that one needs to know about religion? I would suggest first, their belief systems or theology. As a nation we say that one has a right to believe what one wants and we act as a people to safeguard freedom of thought and speech. That’s as it ought to be. What distinguishes religious persons however is their acceptance of some particular things—revelations, insights, doctrines that greatly affect their actions. We saw that in the Galileo case and the Scopes decision. What we should also see is that some beliefs get altered and they are usually altered by those who care the most about them.

The proliferation of divisions among Christians and the increasing pluralism of religion in America means that we cannot know every belief of every group, but we should be sufficiently knowledgeable to know the problems, the issues, and possible relationships that exist in the fields in which we have specialized, such as anthropology, biology, medicine, or economics. My suggestion seems somewhat academic, but that is because you as honor students should learn to express your judgment about how religion and your field of specialty ought to relate to stem cell research, regulations of the corporations, human rights, and international trade. None of the religious judgments made concerning them should be left only to the self-appointed interpreters of religion and the churches.

Not everything in religion is determined by belief. We need to know also something about the consequences of belief—the practices of religion.

Religion seeks to teach persons not only to believe in God but to obey God, to do God’s will. Moreover the policy concerns that have led to the



reemergence of the importance of religion in the public square are action-driven. They seek a specific result regardless of the specificity of religion in respect to a particular issue, especially those issues that did not exist when the religion was founded.

The Galileo case and the Scopes Trial illustrate this. Both point to the origins of fundamentalism, an attempt to freeze the interpretation of a text or understanding of a teaching for all eternity. This is a characteristic found in all religions of the Western world as well as in the non-Western world.

It is important for us to know the manner in which beliefs are implemented in order to know the value of religious teaching. What institutions are established because of a particular belief? All of us can recognize so-called "radical fundamentalism" that leads to killing when it is found in the religion of others, but we do not always recognize it when religion is used to defend, protect, or enlarge the power and influence of our way of life or our nation's interest.

The issue of the equality of women is perhaps the key one for investigation and study of practice today. It is a major concern of the churches, the United Nations and some governments. It is important also because we can see so clearly the wrongs in the non-Western world, yet remain oblivious or indifferent to the wrongs in the areas dominated by Western religions. Religions worldwide share a great deal of the problems associated with patriarchy, polygamy, abortion, sexual abuse, the sex trade, and discrimination in work, education, and citizenship opportunity. The question of the equality and dignity of women needs to be a central concern in the study of religions in honors programs and among honors scholars.

We live in a very difficult period of history. Although the Cold War has ended, many small wars have begun and continue. There are wars against drugs and wars on terrorism. In addition, there is the change that flows from new technology, new modes of communication, trade and travel. Human community is fragile and cries for support. We need to incorporate religion into our honors programs to help cope with the problems and stresses of the world order.

World orders and world civilizations are embedded in religious traditions. These traditions have supplied us with the existing answers to the questions of our origins, nature, and destiny. Whether or not these answers continue to define us we profit from knowing what they are, how they affect us, and how they can be changed to better serve us. A fuller knowledge of religions will enlarge our understanding of who we are and who are our neighbors.

Religion may enable us in spite of its pluralism or perhaps because of it to move beyond our "just war" mentality and our win-lose approach to conflict. Pluralism's diversity may motivate us to seek ways of mediation and reconciliation. It may even teach us to love and act justly toward each other.

As a nation we have become salespersons for democracy as the ideal form of human governance. Change the regime and democratize the nation and the core of the problems will go away. We have forgotten the caution of the ancients about democracy's defects. Democracy may guarantee self-expression. It does not guarantee justice or fairness or love. Only an authentic intellectual religion can do that. Therefore, honors persons and programs should move in that direction. Our present reliance upon weapons of warfare and military skill is not

sufficient and cannot guarantee our survival, nor is economic power adequate. We need to employ the positive binding force that is found in religion—love—to form the foundations of civil society, of personal relations, of community. Religion must be used to lessen greed, envy, and hatred. It needs to be employed to address the failures of globalization and to create human economic, political, and social systems. We need to study religion in order to make it a force for peace and love.

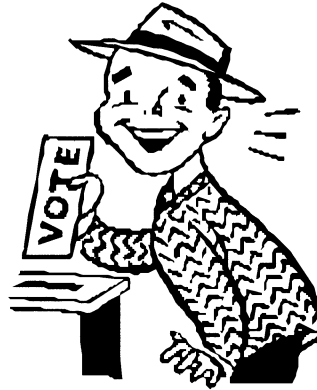
America has long thought itself exceptional. We are the city set upon the hill. The exceptionalism has manifested itself historically partly in the vitality of its religious traditions and religions. Among the developed nations of the world, American religiosity is the greatest. That blessing can, however, be undermined if other American values like commercialization and commodification overtake religion. Religion in America can benefit greatly from serious work by honors students and honors programs.

The re-emergence of religion as a factor of importance in the public life of the nation can be bad as well as good. The Ku Klux Klan and some military-like militias have killed in the name of God, and we have had our Jonestown. Many do use religion to justify evil and do harm. It need not be that way and will not be that way if some of the brightest devote their pursuit of learning and meaning in life to the pursuit of broad honor and authentic intellectual religion.

America has a Greek and Roman as well as a Judeo-Christian heritage. Perhaps at this juncture in our history we need to lift up some aspects of our Greek heritage to sensitize us to the ambiguities of democracy and the importance of employing ethics to assure us that our gods are not too small. *rdc*

## **NCHC 2003 Election Results**

**Congratulations  
to the newly  
elected members of  
the NCHC  
Executive Committee!**



**Vice President:**

Virginia McCombs, Oklahoma City University

**Executive Secretary/Treasurer:**

Elizabeth Beck, Iowa State University

**Executive Committee - Professional:**

Bruce Carter, Syracuse University

Lydia Daniel, Hillsborough Community College

Nancy Poulson, Florida Atlantic University

Charlie Slavin, University of Maine

**Executive Committee - Student:**

Adam D'Antonio, Long Island University, C.W. Post

Maggie Hill, Oklahoma State University

Sophia Ortiz, Long Island University, Brooklyn

**Thanks to all of you who ran for office and your  
colleges and universities that were willing  
to support you.**



*James Tallmon*

## Whose Interests Are We Serving?

I went to two different undergraduate research conferences last year. The contrasting experiences there illustrated beautifully for me something I'd been pondering of late. Let me back up.

A few years ago a freshman turned in the most elegant, insightful, tightly focused bit of rhetorical analysis of Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream" I've had the pleasure to read. She did a close reading of the text and made some observations about how two schemes and two tropes work in concert to make the speech excellent. It was so traditional, and yet so meticulously reasoned and fully supported by examples from the text, I encouraged her to submit it for a local undergraduate research conference. It was turned down two years in a row.

I suspect it was turned down because it was too traditional, or perceived as being passé. After all, what new thing could possibly be said about "I Have a Dream"? This suspicion was based on the types of things that generally showed up on the program at that conference: analyses of pop culture (song lyrics, movies, MTV's "Real World,") anything that reflected an orientation congruent with sexy lines of research (feminist criticism, environmental or multicultural) or what have you. It got under my skin that someone's stock application of a popular communication model to another in the endless parade of pop fare had won out over my student's fine paper.

The following year I had a group of honors students come to me for assistance in a proposal for that conference, but they said they weren't sure what sorts of things might be well received. I told them, somewhat cynically, that anything of the sort described above would likely get accepted. They put together a proposal for a multi-media analysis of the Tom Hanks' movie, "Cast Away." Each participant proposed using a communication model based on how well it was suited to discussion of the particular communicative aspect of the movie they chose to analyze.

You guessed it. Those students did an excellent job on their presentation, but, in all honesty, it was somewhat inane, and they knew it. They did the equivalent of what my mentor would call "drive-by criticism." They latched onto whatever model was at hand, and applied it (oftentimes by means of some excruciating contortions) in a way that was certainly entertaining, but not very illuminating. They went through the motions, but they couldn't escape the nagging feeling that they had, with my help, concocted a scholarly sideshow piece. But they *had* been accepted. They were happy for the experience, but I don't get the impression they think too highly of communication research. I think, in the final analysis, they felt sullied.

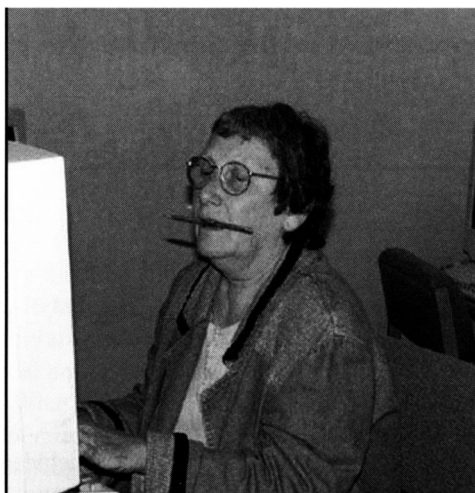
At the other conference, a conference that celebrates "excellence across campus," I attended a panel by a team of engineering students. These students sent aloft a balloon with a cluster of instruments they'd built, along with a camera for taking crop photos. It was relatively obvious these students were doing nothing new. What they'd accomplished had no doubt been done thousands of times. But that wasn't the point. Their enthusiasm was the hallmark of their presentation. The process of collaborating on a fundamental project of the nature they'd attacked was highly educational, satisfying, and rewarding. They had learned a great deal by going through the process of designing, creating, troubleshooting and implementing a project that was substantive, but by no means cutting edge.

I fear some conference organizers are either ideologically predisposed to reject, or easily bored by foundational/traditional things, and they assume what is best for building a high power conference program is what best serves student scholars. Who are we to assume that what is blasé to senior scholars isn't earth shattering for undergraduates? Liberal arts education involves laying a theoretical foundation, then systematically building upon that foundation. Foundational experiences must never be compromised in the name of currency. Today's trends often end up in tomorrow's ash heap. Enduring ideas are foundational, and if such fundamentals are not celebrated at the undergraduate research conference, even the honors conference, we will simply condition our charges to become the most vacuous sorts of faddists imaginable. Or turn them off to research altogether. Who would wish to sully themselves, year in and year out, just to get accepted?

*James Tallmon directs the Theodore Roosevelt Honors/Leadership Program at Dickinson State University. Dr. Tallmon's article first appeared in the Fall 2002 issue of The National Honors Report, but its last few lines were unfortunately jumbled. We are happy to reprint the article in its entirety and apologize for our mistake.*

## PEAKS AND VALLEYS

*Tom Sawyer*



Joan Digby, Editor, *Peterson's Guide to Honors Programs and Colleges*, hard at work. Dr. Digby is honors director at Long Island University, C. W. Post Campus.

### **Absence of Entries for NCHC Institutions in the 3rd Edition of the *Peterson's Guide to Honors Programs and Colleges***

#### ***Purpose***

Upon publication of the 3rd edition of *Peterson's Guide to Honors Programs and Colleges*, it was discovered that of the 816 institutional members of the National Collegiate Honors Council, 240 were not included. A survey was undertaken with the purpose of assessing the reasons why such a large number of the member institutions had no entry in that guide.

#### ***Method***

The master list of NCHC member institutions was obtained from the Executive Secretary Treasurer, Earl Brown, and was compared with the entries in the 3rd edition of *Peterson's Guide to Honors Programs and Colleges*. A list of possible reasons for the lack of an institution's entry was developed into a survey based upon input from NCHC President Rosalie Otero, Joan Digby, the editor of the guide, and others. A survey instrument, along with a cover letter explaining its purpose, and a postage paid return envelope was sent to the 240 member institutions found not to have an entry.

#### ***Results***

Of the 240 surveys that were mailed, a total of 119 (49.6%) replies were received, while one was returned as undeliverable. The table on the next page provides a summary of these 119 responses, categorized according to the primary reason for the lack of an entry.

*Tom Sawyer is honors director at North Central College in Naperville, IL. He presented this report from the Research Committee, which he chairs, to NCHC Executive Committee, October 2002.*

Stated Reason	Number	Percentage
Honors program/college no longer in operation	2	1.7
Institution no longer member of NCHC	1	0.8
New director/dean - unaware of opportunity	29	24.4
Did not receive request or misplaced request	31	26.1
Task too burdensome or lack of clerical support	29	24.4
No perceived benefit to having an entry	5	4.2
Other	22	18.5

The written responses that accompanied the 22 “other” responses were examined and five distinct categories of reason were identified. The following table provides a summary of these reasons.

Stated Reason	Number	Percentage
Materials were submitted but no entry	2	1.7
Joint submission with another institution	2	1.7
Honors program is new or undergoing revision	11	9.2
New member of NCHC	4	3.4
Honors program not used for student recruitment	3	2.5

### Conclusions

Nearly 75% of the responses suggested one of three fundamental reasons why their institution was not included in the *Peterson's Guide*: (1) the director reported not having received, or having misplaced the request for an entry (26.1%); (2) the current director is new and was unaware of the opportunity (24.4%); or (3) workload/lack of clerical support/other priorities interfered with completing the task of making a submission (24.4%). A large number of those who reported lack of awareness of the opportunity to submit an entry, or having misplaced the request, also checked “other” and in a written comment indicated that their workload may have contributed. Representative of this is one who reported not having received a request and included the comment, “I fear that even if I had received the materials, I would not have had the time or resources to complete them.” Another who reported having misplaced the request wrote, “Frankly, I just blew it, no good reason except for the usual excuse of too much to do.”

The other 25% of respondents were dispersed across a diverse spectrum of reasons for not having an entry. The only other category to approach a double-digit percentage were those who indicated the honors program was new, or that it was undergoing dramatic revisions and they were concerned about having it entered in the *Peterson's Guide*. Representative of this was the following comment from a respondent: “The program is considering radical restructuring and I did not want to disseminate misinformation.”

It should be noted that a few respondents had the impression that an entry into the *Peterson's Guide* was associated with a cost. Indeed, some of those who indicated “no perceived benefits,” also mentioned the cost. While I suspect it was true of earlier requests for submission, future requests, especially directed to this group of institutions, should clearly indicate that there is no payment from them to either NCHC or the publisher.

A relatively large number (34 or 28.6%) of those who responded volunteered in a written comment an interest in submitting an entry for the next edition. This likely underestimates the actual number as there was no specific opportunity for respondents to indicate such an interest. Given the apparent workload issues for many directors/deans, it is suggested that those institutions not currently included in the *Peterson's Guide* be sent submission materials as soon as feasible. As many recently responded to the survey, they will be more aware of the meaning of the request. In addition, receiving the request well in advance of any deadline also may permit them to arrange for the completion of their entry during a period when their workload provides a greater opportunity. ~~ndc~~

*Lydia Daniel and Joan Digby*

## **Selling People on Honors Education**

**I**n thinking about how to market our hundreds of honors programs and colleges around the country, the External Relations Committee co-chairs have arrived at the conclusion that no one is more equipped to market our programs than we are! So, we thought, why not publish some instructions on how to sell ourselves through our local newspapers.

What follows is a generic article about honors education, with some information about NCHC and about our new *Peterson's Honors Programs & Colleges*, now in its third edition. External Relations invites you to take this challenge. Copy the article; make whatever changes and additions you want; rewrite it as much as you like, and add your own name as a by-line. On the next page, you will find a lead sentence that introduces copy about your own particular honors program. Add your material; then send the article to local newspapers. We suggest an early summer target date.

Don't hesitate to adapt the article to news that will attract attention to your program. If you have good pictures, add them. If you have an honors student who has made headlines or done something special, add the human-interest piece. In our experience, many local papers NEED COPY all the time. They may be happy to have this article. If your local paper takes your article, please clip it and send a copy to Elizabeth Beck, Executive Secretary/Treasurer, at the NCHC office,

Let's see how much we can do to make people aware of the exceptional education we offer.

*Dr. Lydia Daniel and Dr. Joan Digby co-chair the External Relations Committee of the NCHC. Dr. Daniel is honors director at Hillsborough CC. Dr. Digby, Honors Director, Long Island University. C.W. Post Campus, conceived the guide to NCHC programs, created the template, solicited material from all NCHC-member institutions, edited the material, and sold the idea to Peterson's. The guide is currently in its third edition.*

*You can read about the creation of the guide in the NNN issue of The National Honors Report. Dr. Digby's guide from its inception was called "Joan's Book" by the members of the NCHC Publications Board; she, however, made it the NCHC's book.*

**In case your students wonder about the value of an honors education, have them check out this website:**

**<http://www.cbs.com/primetime/survivor6/survivors/prof/rob.shtml>**

**- from Norm Weiner, SUNY Oswego**

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **Get an A+ Undergraduate Education: Go HONORS! (add your byline here)**

Are you bored with high school and ready to take on the world? Have you raised a family and now want an education of your own? Does learning beyond the ordinary catch your imagination? If you are a strong student filled with ideas, longing for creative expression and ready to take on career-shaping challenges, then an Honors education is just for you. Honors programs and colleges offer some of the finest undergraduate degrees available in American colleges and do it with students in mind. The essence of honors is personal attention, top faculty, enlightening seminars, exciting study-travel experiences, research options, career-building internships—all designed to enrich a college education and prepare you for life achievements. And here's an eye-opening bonus: honors program and colleges may reward your past academic performance by giving you scholarships that will help you pay for your higher education.

Students who do well in high school are the very students that colleges and universities are competing for. Generally, if you have a 90 or better High School average (and a "hot" score on the SAT or ACT) (plug in whatever figures work for you), you can think seriously about using your brains to pay for your college education. Past performance means a lot to colleges, and many donors and colleges like to support students who have a track record of doing exceptionally well. So, in addition to state and federal money based on need, many colleges and universities have honors scholarships based on merit! Put them all together, and you may be offered a scholarship package that will let you go to college without racking up big student loans.

Honors programs and honors colleges have frequently been called "the alternative Ivy League." That's because honors—no matter where it is located—offers some of the same benefits as an Ivy League learning environment: small discussion-oriented seminars, individual attention and the benefit of studying with the cream of the faculty.

Since the honors curriculum generally takes up less than ~ of a total degree, it also leaves you plenty of time to double major, play in the orchestra, write for the paper, act, play soccer or raise a family. Because honors emphasizes the extraordinary, many programs are also looking for adult students, international students and people whose life experiences add dimension to their thought. Though you might not be coming to college right out of high school, you may well be a very attractive candidate for honors.

Take your choice of institutions: community college, state or private four-year college or large research university. There are honors opportunities in each.

What they share in common is an unqualified commitment to academic excellence. Honors education teaches students to think and write clearly, to be excited by ideas and to become independent, creative, self-confident learners. It prepares exceptional students for professional choices in every imaginable sphere of life: arts and sciences, engineering, business, health, education, medicine, theatre, music, film, journalism, media, law, politics—invent your own professional goal, and honors will guide to you it!

Honors is most often structured as a general education or "core" component followed by advanced courses (often called colloquia or seminars) and some kind of culminating project or thesis based on research or creative expression. Almost always, honors curriculum is incorporated within whatever number of credits is required of every student for graduation. It includes students of every major on a campus and very rarely requires students to take additional credits. Students who complete an honors program or honors college curriculum frequently receive transcript and diploma notations, as well as certificates, medallions or other citations at graduation ceremonies. All this is great for your resumé!

For more than half a century, Honors education, given definition by the National Collegiate Honors Council, has been an institution on American campuses. NCHC member schools all subscribe to a list of essential characteristics that make an honors education worth the extra effort and commitment. You can find the NCHC on the World Wide Web at [www.nchchonors.org](http://www.nchchonors.org).

You can read about more than 500 NCHC honors options in the new, third edition of *Peterson's Guide to Honors Programs & Colleges*, which is available in bookstores. This 634-page book describes each honors curriculum in detail and places the program or college in the Campus Context. It includes the application process and participation requirements. Honors scholarship opportunities are also spelled out in detail. This convenient guide is the only Honors guide on the market. Since Honors Deans and Directors are extremely interested in talking directly with prospective students, *Peterson's Guide to Honors Programs & Colleges* gives you a directory of telephone numbers and e-mail addresses that will put you on the road to admission. If you are an exceptional student, then this is the one guide that will help you get the most out of college.

Order your copy by phone from Peterson's direct at 1-800-338-3282. To order on line, go to Peterson's bookstore: <http://e-catalog.thomsonlearning.com/326/>

If you are interested in attending a college or university in our region that has an honors program, then you should be thinking about . . . (add your information here). **nchc**

John W. Warren

## Partnerships in Honors: Combining Efforts in a Common Cause

I appreciate so very much this opportunity to speak to an issue that has long been close to my heart. I am addressing our topic today from two vantage points: For more than thirty years, I served the Honors Society of Phi Kappa Phi as a member, chapter officer (multiple offices), regional vice president, and national associate and executive director. I have been affiliated with ACHS [Association of College Honors Societies] for almost fifteen years, participating almost every year in annual conference program sessions and serving as executive committee member, vice president and president.

And I am here today because of [NCHC President] Hew Joiner's commitment to NCHC and also to the integrity of honors on college and university campuses. With Hew's leadership in the NCHC and Dorothy Mitsifer's long and worthy service to ACHS, we have two visionary leaders who see the importance of establishing partnerships in honors. I commend them both on the endeavor.

In Phi Kappa Phi over the years as I visited campus chapters, spoke at initiations, and conducted officer training workshops, I repeatedly encouraged some type of cooperation/combined efforts on campus. I saw our greatest needs in my society to be "visibility" and "respect." And I contend that these two needs are still our greatest challenges in the honors community because they encompass all that we do—initiations, programs, and activities.

I perceive our aim in developing Partnership as seeking an effective way to promote the integrity of honors ("respect") and to increase its "visibility."

This, indeed, is an aim in my own society as well as other *bona fide* honor societies, and it is especially so with the Association of College Honors Societies that I want to address momentarily. An endeavor to preserve the integrity of honors is what led to organizing ACHS in 1925. In 1900, such societies as Phi Beta Kappa, Tau Beta Pi, Phi Kappa Phi, Alpha Omega Alpha had already become well-respected honor societies committed to very restrictive high standards. But from 1900 to 1925, academicians—academic deans and presidents—became perturbed with the deluge of honors groups on campuses that gave little or no attention to high standards (or sometimes any standards)—thus polluting true honor and the goal for excellence.

History, we are often told, repeats itself. Indeed, it has with regard to the honors community. Once again our campuses are experiencing a variety of groups professing to be honors societies but show no evidence of following high standards or a legitimate process of chartering campus chapters. Further, because these groups appear on campus, students understandably accept them as worthy honors organizations.

*John W. Warren, President of the Association of College Honor Societies and Executive Director Emeritus, Phi Kappa Phi, delivered this address at the 2002 NCHC Annual Conference held in Salt Lake City.*

I say all this to underscore the timely theme of partnerships to combine efforts for our common cause—the integrity of honors. I strongly believe that through such united action we can regain lost ground and also sustain respect for honors. Let us look at examples: ACHS has witnessed isolated successes where ACHS member societies have set up honors councils on their respective campuses giving honors a single unified voice on those campuses. Such cooperation or partnering has made a tremendous difference in the programming, visibility, academic and faculty and administrative support of the honor societies.

As Executive Director of Phi Kappa Phi, I remember several years ago visiting one of our chapter initiations in Wisconsin. It was a campus honors-day event—all honors societies held their initiations sometime during that day, had various displays and activities, and concluded with a combined banquet for all groups with student speakers representing the various groups. It was hailed as the largest single event on campus each year—much larger than the annual athletic banquet. Here was extraordinary visibility of HONORS—a combining of efforts in a common cause.

In turn, I have witnessed ACHS's attempt to address this issue in the past. In the late 80's, for example, ACHS appointed a task force to study the common links between ACHS and NCHC and campus honors programs. Nothing definitive resulted but it was a start in identifying broad general connections—that is—striving for excellence and promoting honors.

Then in 2001, ACHS opened a dialogue with NCHC by including Hew Joiner on a panel at the annual conference to discuss our linkage. (By the way, the theme of the

conference was “connections.”) Others on that panel were representatives of university divisions of honors programs and student activities. All members of this panel were positive in identifying similar goals as well as common concerns. For some time now, ACHS has established communications with university presidents, provosts/academic deans as well as national professional groups of university administrators, registrars, and deans of admission.

***“Once again our campuses are experiencing a variety of groups professing to be honors societies but show no evidence of following high standards or a legitimate process of chartering campus chapters.”***


Now what's ahead for all of us in the honors community? I want to mention two primary challenges we face and I believe that we can successfully meet these challenges only if we work together as partners.

1. First, we must preserve and nurture our inherent connections; that is, we already have a select receptive audience with a similar goal. University administrators want their institutions to be models of excellence, e.g., presidential scholarships, chairs of excellence, outstanding faculty awards, etc. Also, accrediting agencies look for academic excellence in universities they visit; and the number of honor societies and a quality honors program are two main evidences they consider. In other words, we already have an “ear” to promote what we are about. Yet we can too easily let that “ear” close if we lose our credibility with the invasion of non-certified groups that solicit money from students and garner membership that mocks the high standards promoted in the honors community. Preserving

and nurturing this level of support are vital to our existence. Together, we can counter such movements and be a strong complement for collegiate excellence.

2. Second, we must join together to speak with one voice as we identify the best students and move them forward in their academic growth, leadership roles, and ultimately in their life's work. In our various formats, we have separately and effectively celebrated honors. NCHC, for example, provides a means for honors

students to showcase their endeavors to demonstrate excellence; honors programs have followed similar activities on campus; honor societies have initiated productive campus activities and impressive initiations that convey the worthiness of honors. Put all these actions together, and we have a remarkable impetus for honors. It is important to note that with a prevailing attitude of anti-intellectualism and an indictment of honors as being elitist, we can no longer stand apart. With a unified voice, we can establish a legitimacy and effectiveness to insure and promote the integrity of honors.

In conclusion, I hope that we are doing today—discussing our common goals and concerns and the potential of partnership—will continue to be a part of this convention as well as the annual conference of ACHS. I would encourage local honors directors and campus society leaders to generate both a discussion of this need and also seek ways to implement cooperative efforts. 

# ***CURIOSITY ABOUT THE WORLD***

*Elizabeth Boretz*

## **Beginning in Honors 2002: The Ethos of Optimism**

**W**here do honors programs come from? We share many common histories. The Eastern Oregon University Honors Program stumbled onto campus just two years ago, yet in a fashion perhaps reminiscent of many who settled in this region in the 1800's.

Building an honors program out of nothing more than a vision has been fun overall, and rewarding quite often. However, my participation in Beginning in Honors© at the 2002 NCHC's national conference brought deeper meaning and greater motivation to me, which are precisely what I had been needing that week. Finding a supportive community whose collective wisdom provided me a wealth of new ideas to bring back to Eastern Oregon University will surely propel me onward for a long time. Our first lesson was that no program is running perfectly. We opened the session by writing out our "burning issues," and discovering how much we all shared in this regard. All participants in my group of twenty-six leaders of small college honors programs spoke fondly of their students and allies on campus, but none present could say that they had the full understanding of their colleagues in what they are doing. I surely can identify with this, and I sometimes wonder why optimism can feel so isolating, even on a campus where we are proudly dedicated to undergraduate instruction and the liberal arts. My small university in mountainous Eastern Oregon, with 1,900 undergraduates on campus, stands amid monuments to pioneers who settled in the region. I now can identify with them, too, at least in some respects.

As I tried to sleep, after my first session at the NCHC conference, the wheels of my mind spun rapidly. Thumbing through my conference materials, the announcement of the book discussions for students turned my thoughts to recent readings. Each year I have taken part in the task of selecting a book for the new student summer reading program. We try to find true stories that hold life lessons which somehow relate to our region, or at least to our students' concerns. In seeking prospective readings, a colleague placed *The Jump-Off Creek* by Molly Gloss in my hands, a tale of a woman who homesteaded in this area in the 1800's, all by herself. As I read the novel that had been pieced together from an authentic diary, I pitied the protagonist who froze in the winter and labored to near death in order to build a secure dwelling. She even described the incredibly laborious task of keeping herself tidy; despite the best of efforts, she still would find that she never completely managed to free herself of the endlessly abundant muck on her legs and clothes. Other homesteaders came to her rescue in hungry times, and she learned to barter in order to survive. Some in her midst, of course, took no interest in supporting her unassuming quest.

*Elizabeth Boretz directs the honors program at Eastern Oregon University.*



I felt sorry for her as I read the story, but now I realize that I share in this traveler's woes and triumphs. This is the same groundbreaker's spirit that I saw in all of the beginners whom I met at the conference this year. Many of us truly are surviving on scraps, or at least tiny budgets. We all are creative and resourceful, motivated by a common faith in the good that we are doing for our students. None of us present were entirely content with our programs in their current state; development was our communal aim. On the other hand, few if any present had mastered the art of escaping the muck that clings to us no matter what we do to sustain and develop our programs cleanly: difficulty recruiting or properly preparing faculty instructors, too-low admissions standards, too-high admissions standards, too-large programs, low graduation rates, student emotional fragility, challenges to create a sense of community among students, and colleagues' suspicions that we are disturbing the campus ethos in general. Fruitful discussions of ways to cope with these challenges further stirred in my head throughout the conference, and they have yet to leave me.

Unlike most of my NCHC colleagues, I designed and initiated an honors program, rather than inherited one that was already in place. Still, honors programs seem to be in a constant state of regeneration, so we all are starting new programs in one respect or another. As for me, it was mostly an accident. All that I was trying to do, back in 1999 when I received a .33 "Dean's Intern" teaching release, was to find a way to incorporate academic excellence into the general campus culture. I had felt at the time that we did not celebrate student achievements enough, nor were we encouraging students to strive for greater creativity and intellectual risk-taking. I worked with the campus newspaper staff to produce one issue, at the beginning of the year, entirely dedicated to the theme of academic excellence. I began to examine what other universities do to foster and celebrate student excellence. I ended up creating a modest program of self-directed projects revolving around campus leadership, community outreach, and undergraduate research, which I then shared with the Dean's Advisory Council in the School of Arts and Sciences. I suggested that we post this list of requirements on the campus website, and that students who accomplish all items should be given special recognition upon completion, or at graduation. I heard no objections, and was advised to speak to the Provost at the time. I had no sense of where this road would lead.

That summer I met with the Provost, who has since moved on to another university. He pointed out to me that what I had created was called an honors program, and students who fulfill its requirements should receive an Honors Baccalaureate. This intrigued me, so I asked what I should do next. We joined the NCHC, and I

began to read the many useful publications. I then had to wait until the fall, and circulate among all academic units, in order to gain the necessary approvals so that we could adopt the new degree program. Piece of cake. The program was self-directed. I would help to coordinate the paperwork, but there would be no significant costs to anyone. The following winter, the proposal to adopt the EOU Honors Program passed unanimously. Students immediately took note. These early days of 2001 in the gently broken terrain of honors learning were deceptively blissful.

It was not long before I had a committee, which soon found itself deluged with new decisions to make. What graduation regalia would students receive? How would we pay for it? What about the student who has a double major? How do we handle students in the program whose grades drop below the minimum requirement for just one term? Meanwhile, the President began to suggest to me that we develop honors

***"The NCHC has shown me that our programs need not displace those who are already comfortably populating our campuses. Rather, we enhance the academic environment in general."***

courses. We complied with this recommendation, unaware of the controversies that this would spark. The committee and I created proposals that would offer just one honors course per term, open to all students, such that they would not detract from our already limited course offerings in many areas. This all happened to occur at the same time that a faculty unionization movement began, and also during a time of potentially devastating budget cuts and revisions at the state level. In addition, in the course of the 2001-02 year we had in succession a departing Provost, an Interim Provost, and a newly selected one, each with a unique perspective on his role in honors and the direction that the program should take. The Honors Program suddenly became the object of some colleagues' suspicion and resentment, with accusations that new developments would distort the campus image, demand too much work of everyone, and consume precious, dwindling resources.

Then came the spring of 2002, when I was back to teaching a full load as an Associate Professor of Spanish (my Dean's Intern release was far behind me), and I was running the Honors Program, which rapidly exploded into an all-consuming responsibility. I had not anticipated the enormous time demands of parent contact and incoming freshmen visits in the recruitment phase. In addition, an unexpected departure in the

spring left me to take over coordination of international study that term. Also, somewhere along the way I had found that my curiosities about administrative issues were usurping my dedication to humanistic endeavors. So, on top of my workdays that were now beginning at 6:00 a.m., in my evening hours I was a 2/3-time graduate student online, with the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, where I will graduate in August 2003 with my M.A. in Higher Education Administration. This frenzied existence, I have learned from those whom I met at the NCHC, is somewhat normal for those of us who lead honors programs. Being a student of postsecondary administrative issues has provided me a source of insight into the minds and actions of my colleagues, who are normally fun, pleasant people, yet who in the spring of 2002 actually tabled the proposals for honors courses. They did, however, approve the proposal to use the Program as a recruitment tool to bring in ambitious freshmen. These actions placed me in a position to recruit new students, but to offer them no honors courses. This was my first encounter with the challenges of promoting an honors program on a small campus.

I spent the summer working with our newly arrived Provost, talking about plans for the future, and strategies to develop the program. As fall of 2002 arrived, I felt reinvigorated, and I persuaded my Dean to permit a ballot vote on the proposals for honors courses that had been tabled the spring prior. I then met with all of the Honors Program's known allies, and asked each to spread the word that the program needed to develop further. I attempted to ease criticisms that insufficient discussion time had been permitted, by scheduling a faculty forum during the second week of the fall term. Thirteen professors showed up, which did not include the two who had been lashing out on the faculty listserv against the proposed new design of the Honors Program. Throughout this journey I have seen colleagues at their worst and at their best. Conflict is good, but so is progress. Let the dirt fly all around me; I still am proud to dwell in a newly developed, albeit earthen-floored, habitat. All of us helped to build it. I suspect that time will reveal that those who tried to tear down the walls may have helped to make them even stronger. Their input is valuable, regardless of the delays and frustrations they have posed.

Fortunately, I have many colleagues and administrators who are firmly dedicated to undergraduate excellence, and the seventeen freshmen who showed up for this fall's Honors Orientation Seminar (under a non-honors prefix, because it had not yet been approved) have not sensed the embattled history of their recruit-

ment. In fact, they are delighted to view themselves as the trendsetters. As I write this, students are working to establish our Honors Council, and they have already designed Honors Program t-shirts. They have begun to schedule some inaugural events. They are eager to create our Honors Program Newsletter, and we are scrambling to uncover funding sources for travel to next year's National Conference of the NCHC. Optimism is not lonely at all when one is surrounded by ambitious, energetic students. I now feel fully entrenched in honors leadership, walking the line between the theater of faculty politics, and student real-life drama (and comedy). There is no turning back, and even if there

were, the students and the supporters among my colleagues and administrators would not permit it. I still find that I must dust myself off more often than I wish I had to, but I know that this is probably one of the best jobs in the world of higher education.

What is next? Despite the challenges past and present, my outlook for the EOU Honors Program is entirely positive. At last, I have been given a .5 teaching release. I am exploring the prospects of grants to fund perhaps

some faculty development opportunities as we begin to offer honors courses, and to fund student and faculty mentor travel to undergraduate conferences. The students are constantly brainstorming ideas for trips and activities, and ways to establish a sense of community without removing themselves from the general campus culture. We are keeping our fingers crossed for a designated Honors Lounge to be made available to us after a new building is complete, and after the shifting of departments is finished. And I have submitted a request for a digital camera and well-equipped computer, for the honors students to begin documenting their history, to produce recruitment materials with me, and to generate news items for our website. Unlike the weary homesteaders, we have the gift of access to modern technology, and helping hands when we need them.

Monuments to the pioneers throughout Eastern Oregon commemorate some notable achievements, yet they also remind us of the harm and pain suffered by nations which had already long established themselves well in this region. This is where my analogy fails, for the current proliferation of honors programs poses no threat to the already established territory of higher education in general. We aim to cohabitate peacefully and to prosper from the synergy arisen from a blend of old traditions and new views. The NCHC has shown me that our programs need not displace those who are already comfortably populating our campuses. Rather, we enhance the academic environment in general.

***"Many of us truly are surviving on scraps, or at least tiny budgets. We all are creative and resourceful, motivated by a common faith in the good that we are doing for our students."***

The greatest of challenges of the start-up phase may indeed be behind me now. However, the first person whom I met at Beginning in Honors© told me that this was her third time attending the program. Alas, it is not in the nature of honors education for those of us who promote it to declare "victory" at any particular moment. Beginning in Honors© itself never even ended, exactly. After the last of its sessions, discussions continued over meals and between other conference workshops and events. My notebook swelled with tips that I picked up in passing. I learned ideas for how to recruit faculty into the honors courses, and ways to provide incentives even if I don't have any money. For example, we talked about the often overlooked honors faculty to be found among the adjunct instructors on our campuses, and the value of a simple certificate of appreciation, which when awarded with the proper timing, makes the extra effort to teach in honors more worthwhile. Another suggestion was to use honors teaching as a faculty hiring incentive, by guaranteeing new faculty the opportunity. The question of how to convey the spirit of honors education to colleagues also brought many useful insights to me. In addition, I picked up excellent ideas for how to make a newsletter work for the program, by distributing it to prospective faculty as well as to the students and their parents, for example. The most important theme in all of this was the message that one's inclination to focus all energy on the students must be balanced with an active effort to pay attention to everything else. All of these small morsels of input, combined, will fuel me well through the coming year of further program development and exploration.

Barely one week before I boarded a plane for Salt Lake City to take my seat at the Beginning in Honors© session, the vote occurred on my campus where the resurrected proposals to offer honors courses passed in my School. They did not pass unanimously, but that will not matter to the students; their potential is not limited by the history of their honors program, nor by the components of the Program that have yet to be developed. As Michael Rayburn urged us all at his plenary session, we must remember to "set goals that don't exist." This is what I have done, and I will continue to do, with the support of the NCHC, colleagues and administrators, and the students who enroll in the EOU Honors Program. Shortly after I returned home from the conference I received a grade on an assignment that I completed for one of my graduate courses. It is a course on organizational development and change for higher education administration. To my horror, I received a score of eight out of a possible ten. The task was analysis of a case study in which I had to assess an educational institution for "readiness and adaptability to change," based on theories that we had been studying. The professor's explanation of my score included the comment that I exhibited a solid grasp of the pertinent theories, but my approach to the case was "overly optimistic." My horror turned to amusement. It is true that as leaders we cannot live on optimism alone. Nor should we abandon it. Optimism is, after all, the place where honors programs come from. *ndo*

### *Corrections*

Anna Marie Nachman, Staff Assistant/Dean's office, Schreyer Honors College, The Pennsylvania State University, checked up on the information we provided in the Summer 2002 issue. She noted that four of the websites for major scholarship websites were incorrect. Thank you, Anna Marie. These websites are correct.

### **WEB SITES FOR SOME MAJOR SCHOLARSHIPS**

#### **British Marshall Scholarships**

<http://www.britishcouncil.org/usa/usabms>

#### **The Churchill**

<http://members.aol.com/churchill>

#### **The Fulbright**

<http://exchanges.state.gov/education/bfs>

#### **The Goldwater Scholarships**

<http://www.act.org/goldwater/>

#### **The Mellon Fellowships**

<http://www.woodrow.org/mellon/>

#### **The Mitchell Scholarships**

<http://www.usirelandalliance.org/mitchell/>

#### **The Rhodes Scholarships**

<http://www.rhodesscholar.org/>

#### **The Thurgood Marshall Scholarships**

<http://www.thurgoodmarshallfund.org/>

#### **The Truman Scholarships**

<http://www.truman.gov/index.cfm>

#### **The Udall Scholarships**

[http://www.udall.gov/p\\_scholarship.htm](http://www.udall.gov/p_scholarship.htm)

*Jay A. Ward*

## **The More Things Change: The Small College Director's Work Load**

**I**n 1990, Linda Kay Allen and Liz Tregor-Dokken conducted a Staffing Needs Survey for NCHC. Two years later, I reported and analyzed the data from that survey that were relevant to the role and work load of small college directors ("Divided Selves: Part-Time Directors." *The National Honors Report*, Winter 1992. Reprinted in *The National Honors Report*, Classics II, Winter 2001). In 2000, Larry Steinhauer of Albion College conducted a Survey of Small College Honors Programs for the Small College Honors Program Committee, the results of which are being published over several issues of *NHR*.

What these surveys, completed approximately a decade apart, reveal is that despite growth in student participation in many small college programs during the 1990s, the typical small college director's institutional support is no greater than it was earlier, while the increase in students has led inevitably to his or her having to assume a heavier work load. Indeed, the evidence suggests that in some respects support for the director's work may have actually deteriorated during this period.

These surveys are not altogether comparable in their methods of data collection or the specific questions that they asked, but I believe that we can nonetheless look at some specific comparisons that demonstrate the largely unchanged circumstances in which many small college directors continue to conduct their work.

For example, the 1990 survey revealed that eighty percent of small college directors serve part-time, whereas the 2000 survey indicated a ninety percent part-time rate; further, since virtually all of these directors are faculty members (ninety-seven percent in 2000), they are almost always being reassigned to honors administration in lieu of teaching a section or two of departmental courses. However, not only has the proportion of part-time directors increased during the decade, but the percentage whose assignment is *less* than fifty percent in honors has increased from seventy percent to ninety-one; these percentages imply that typical directors are now devoting a smaller part of their official load to honors even as the size of many of the programs they administer has grown. In 1990, program direction averaged forty percent of total load, whereas in 2000 it had shrunk to thirty-four percent, illustrating in yet another way that small college directors are currently expected by their institutions to do more in less time and, as we shall see below, with limited assistance.

*Jay Ward is a frequent contributor to The National Honors Report. Dr. Ward serves as director of the Thiel College Honors Program in Greenville, PA.*

We might hope that colleges would have compensated for the situation just described by providing directors with additional staffing or assistance, but, unfortunately, there is no evidence that that has occurred, either. For instance, both in 1990 and in 2000, eighty percent of small college directors

reported that they had neither an assistant director nor an administrative

assistant. [NOTE: In analyzing the 2000 data, Larry Steinhauer defined "significant help from another administrator" to mean that that person devoted at least ten percent of his or her time to honors.] The percentage of directors who had to get along without significant secretarial assistance actually rose from fifty percent in 1990 to sixty-six percent [again measured as ten percent of the secretary's total time] in 2000, while those who have no significant student assistance [one student working eight hours per week] declined slightly from fifty percent in 1990 to forty-four percent in 2000. The more recent survey concluded that nearly sixty percent of small college directors received significant assistance, but we must remember that this assistance might, in fact, be as little as a secretary devoting four hours a week (based on a forty-hour work week) or a work-study student with an eight-hour assignment to

honors duties. Fifteen percent of directors have only the assistance of a student, and more than a quarter of all directors surveyed receive no significant assistance in any of the three forms identified. The survey did reveal that there is a slight positive correlation between size of program and

***"...typical directors are now devoting a smaller part of their 'official' load to honors even as the size of many of the programs they administer has grown."***

combined director/assistance time devoted to its administration, but this conclusion is really only what we would hope and expect to find.

Using a formula that factors in all of these part-time positions, Larry Steinhauer has calculated that small college honors programs average thirty-three hours a week of administrative time and that for every ten additional students this amount grows by almost one hour a week; although considerable differences undoubtedly exist among institutions, it seems certain that in many programs the director is the person investing most, if not all, of this administrative time, and, of course, as student participation grows, the director's time commitment increases correspondingly. Should we be surprised that the average length of service of directors who responded to the 2000 survey was only five years?

Given the unsettling reality that these surveys bring to light, the question remains now, as it did

more than ten years ago, how do we achieve maximum, efficient utilization of our time and resources in order to achieve and maintain the highest possible levels of quality for the students who participate in our programs? And can we do so while simultaneously giving adequate attention

to the other components of our individual professional and disciplinary lives,

keeping in mind that honors program administration is supposedly just over one-third of the average director's total work load?

My conversations with new or less experienced directors reveal that many of them have a very incomplete idea of the multitude of tasks that come with the job, and if they are unfamiliar with all that being a director entails, then it is safe to assume that the administrators whose responsibility it is to support them adequately in their work are even less knowledgeable about such matters. Yet our institutions are quick to publicize and highlight honors as keystones of their academic programs.

For many of us, serving as small college directors is truly a labor of love, but even so we do not wish to be exploited simply because we derive great personal and professional satisfaction from what we do. Perhaps we need another survey to determine how to solve these problems. *rtc*

### Questions for a New Honors Program

1. What is one measure of progress in your program?
2. How well does your current program resemble its original vision of it?
3. In three years, will your program look very much the same or different?
4. What kind of cooperation by whom has caused your program to evolve?
5. How well does your program reflect what is true of your institution at large?

*-From William L. Knox, Northern Michigan University*

*Eddie Weller*

## **Building Community: The Fall Retreat in a Commuter School**

Without question one of the hardest problems confronting an honors program director at a community college or, for that matter any commuter school, is “how do we build a community spirit among our students?” Without on-campus dorms, students have limited contact with each other. With varied work schedules, students often arrive just before class and leave immediately following the end of lectures and labs. And with many external pulls, including family, work, and non-college friends, few undergraduates ever become close to a larger group of students. For these and other reasons, many community college honors program struggle to build camaraderie and *esprit de corps* among their participants.

San Jacinto College South has had great success in breeching this wall through our fall retreat. At the opening of school each August, the returning sophomores are boisterous and welcoming while most of the freshmen are often scared, hesitant, even quiet in our student honors lounge. This dichotomy continues until the retreat, which is generally held in the second or third week in September. After returning, the two groups have normally blended together and everyone is comfortable with each other. The building of the honors community has begun.

Of course, retreats are not new to honors programs. I can remember attending TCU’s honors retreat at Camp Carter in Fort Worth in the fall of my freshman year in 1979. When talking out on the small dock with a group of students until 4 a.m., I learned for the first time that I could talk about subjects that were larger than the small world I had grown up in. That was part of the experience I wanted to pass on to each incoming group.

Since our first retreat in 1999, the program has grown and so has the retreat! Before our retreat, students rarely came by the office and never stayed to talk with each other. After the retreat, it became the meeting place for those who attended. And soon they brought others with them just to “hang out” in the “lounge” (a converted classroom). For over a year I had failed to get students to even drop by regularly. Since that first retreat, students are always around the room.

Included with this brief article is a generic model for a retreat that we have developed over the past several years that works well for us. We do not try to re-invent the wheel every year; instead we change the topic to keep the event fresh. Even so, there are several steps to success. First the school must choose a topic that can challenge the students. We have found that the Phi Theta Kappa Study Topic is excellent. Each year PTK looks at another topic in great detail. They develop a study guide (now available on the web at: <http://www.ptk.org/>) with many possible sub-topics. The guide includes suggested reading materials, movies, and, importantly, well thought out discussion questions.

*Eddie Weller, Ph.D., is the honors program director at San Jacinto College South in Houston, Texas.*

Early each summer, I gather the returning students in the lounge in order to develop the program based on the PTK topic. First we spend time looking through the study guides I have printed off the internet; ideally some students have come by a few days early and picked them up so that they are familiar with them. We spend time narrowing down the discussion questions until we find four or five questions (which we often tweak a bit) that we believe the students can address creatively in a skit. Next we look at the recommended movies and decide on one that will spark good discussion. For instance in 2002, with industrial causes of health problems the sub-topic under a more general topic of health care, we chose *Erin Brockovich*. In past years when the topic was concerning water, we used the film *Dune*. Or when confronting the possible problems of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, we chose *1984*.

After selecting the movie, we choose a keynote speaker from the faculty to kick off the retreat. The tone set by this speaker is incredibly important. Students usually know who is dynamic enough to “wow” the audience, but students also want hard information—facts and figures—from the speaker, outlining the problem. At the same time they want an expert and, of course, someone who is entertaining. While this seems like an impossible prescription to fill, we have succeeded each time. All of our keynote speakers have been amazing. We pay a small honorarium to let them know how much we value what they are doing, but they more than earn it. In fact, in all but one year the faculty member selected for the keynote address stayed for the entire retreat and even participated in the student skits.

After the “intellectual” portion of the planning is done, we decide on the getting-to-know-you activities—from water balloon tosses to games such as capture the flag, we start off with a strenuous activity

followed throughout the retreat by easier games and introductions. Traditionally, the sillier the getting-to-know-you games the better. These help offset the seriousness of the topics. Besides all students enjoy seeing their honors program director soaking wet from water balloons . . .

One of the highlights each year, after the speaker and the movie, is the campfire. Here the students are broken up into groups to discuss the topic. Then, after often-heated conversations, they plan their skits. The faculty members normally stay until around midnight before hitting their bunks. Many of the students stay up all night, while only a few will make it to bed before three or four in the morning. Thankfully, because of the isolated nature of the camp we attend, there are no outside attractions that could cause problems.

By the next day the students have become friends. They usually vie for the funniest skit, tell funny stories about late night events, and tease each other mercilessly. A director does the closing best in tying together all of the skits, the film, and the speaker, while making the campers laugh with funny awards for the students. As long as all students get an award (usually involving bad puns or events of the prior evening), they will feel part of the group and be happy—they’ve now been accepted.

Getting students to attend the retreat is the hardest part. We now require our scholarship recipients to attend, even if the college has to pay their way. With a guaranteed ten or fifteen participants, we then usually can attract around thirty students. And students who have attended one of these retreats as a freshman never fail to go again as a sophomore. In fact, we have had several alums come back just for the retreat, where they tell stories of past retreats, building a lore that grows with our program. *ndc*

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### Top Ten Retreat Guidelines:

1. No electronics allowed (CD players, gameboys, other “individual” games).
2. No playing cards allowed; only allow games, which include large “groups” such as Trivial Pursuit, Outburst, Ubi.
3. No textbooks for studying.
4. No leaving and returning—everyone stays for the entire retreat.
5. No criticism allowed on the retreat—only positives.
6. No one left out because of cost—if a person can’t afford it, college pays for it.
7. No “attitudes” allowed—everyone is equal and friendly.
8. All groups are assigned randomly—if “cliques” are already forming, disregard this rule and purposefully separate the clique members into separate groups.
9. Faculty should participate in activities, but should only act as catalysts in the discussions; faculty members should draw out quieter students.
10. If faculty members snore loudly, try to get them their own cabin.

**Retreat Model**  
**From San Jacinto College South**  
**Houston, Texas**

5:00 p.m.	Arrive - Go to cabins
5:30-6:00 p.m.	Get to know you game - high energy (examples) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Water balloon toss</li> <li>• Water balloon/water gun fight</li> <li>• Volleyball</li> <li>• Capture the flag</li> </ul>
6:00-6:30 p.m.	Dinner
6:45-7:00 p.m.	Get to know you game - low energy (examples) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify the famous person whose name is on your back</li> <li>• Grid with descriptions on it - find someone who fits the description</li> <li>• Break into groups of three and interview each other; rotate the groups</li> </ul>
7:00-7:30 p.m.	Keynote speaker (perhaps a faculty member) to introduce theme of retreat
7:30-7:45 p.m.	Break - always have plenty of soft drinks, water, and snacks!
7:45-9:45 p.m.	Movie relating to the theme of the retreat
10:00 p.m.	Camp fire Break into random discussion groups <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Group members chosen by dots on the name tags or other method</li> <li>• Discussion questions taken/modified from PTK suggestions</li> <li>• Create controversial questions to start a discussion</li> <li>• Look for ways to visually portray the discussion through a skit, etc.</li> <li>• <u>Don't forget S'mores</u></li> </ul>
12:00 (midnight)	Faculty to bed Deep discussions usually continue among students Free time
8:30 a.m.	Breakfast
9:00-10:00 a.m.	Finalize skits to explain the discussion questions
10:30-11:00 a.m.	Skits
11:00-11:30 a.m.	Closing remarks - tie it all together - by the director or a faculty member Add a humorous side <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Silly awards to all students</li> <li>• Limericks</li> </ul>
11:30 a.m.	Pack it up
12:00 noon	Lunch and leave

**For More Information. check out the following websites:**

**Topics:**

Phi Theta Kappa home page: [www.ptk.org](http://www.ptk.org)

Look at the Honors Topics links. NCHC combines with PTK to have satellite link-ups with member institutions for programs on the topics

**Camps:**

American Camping Association home page: [www.acacamps.org](http://www.acacamps.org)

ACA's Campfinder: [search.acacamps.org/search.html](http://search.acacamps.org/search.html)



*Patricia Alley-Josey*

## **Into the World of Honors**

**O**ne morning in March 2002, I awoke from a dreadful sleep. As I shouted out in pain, Ronnie, my husband, burst through the door. My right leg was swollen, my skin discolored by a ring of black, purple, and green bruises. In the center of this ring was a strange, red blemish. The upper part of my thigh had a line of red, swollen tissue. Pain surged through my hip. A blood clot had burst inside my leg. Ronnie ran for the telephone.

For years I have battled brittle diabetes. Hospitalized again and again for high blood sugar and severe edema in my legs, I could not keep up with my class assignments at Lee College. With a heavy heart, I withdraw until my medical condition stabilized. Since I was a small child, I dreamed of attending college. On my wall hangs an old, black and white photograph of a smiling middle-aged man in a black cap and gown. At fifty-seven, he is graduating from Sul Ross University in far West Texas with a Bachelor's Degree. His name is Charles Hunter, my great uncle. Those sparkling eyes, that strong spirit, encouraged me to continue my education, no matter that I am in my thirties.

Although neither of my parents finished high school, through dogged determination and unflagging hope, they made a comfortable home for my siblings and me. I looked to my father for his solid work ethic and to my mother for self-discipline. I honor their legacy of hope by applying their ethics to my work, to prove to myself and to others there is value in a strong work ethic, a love for life, and a solid aspiration to always seek to better oneself.

Even after Ronnie got me safely to the hospital, I could not stop crying. The blood clot meant that I would have to drop college yet again. I was just on the verge of accomplishing more in my life than I ever dreamed possible. That semester, I had become an honors student. When my counselor Rosemary Coffman had suggested honors, I almost did not hide my laughter. Me, an honors student? I could not fathom it. The last book I read was a *Pillsbury Classic Cookbook*. Most of my adult life was spent working menial jobs, and I had little time to do anything but eat and sleep.

I was so frightened by the idea of speaking to Mr. Britt, the Honors Coordinator, that I made Ronnie go with me to the appointment. I felt utterly stupid for even considering taking American Studies, the course that Rosemary suggested, a team-taught interdisciplinary honors course in American history and American Literature. I had graduated high school a long time ago. I would be in a class with people who were intelligent and surely up to speed on the subjects the course covered. Though I always loved history and literature, a course that covered both at the same time sounded very complex.

When we stepped into the Honors Office, Mr. Britt and the Honors Program secretary, Maggie Eubanks, warmly greeted us. I later learned that Maggie, who is close to my age, had successfully completed the Lee College Honors Program and had subsequently transferred into honors at Lamar University in Beaumont, Texas. After talking to Maggie, I felt better. Maybe there was hope. Maybe I could survive an honors course. As I listened to Mr. Britt describe the Honors Program, American Studies, and the accomplishments of former and current students, I was

*Patricia Alley-Josey presented her American Studies paper at the 2002 Texas Gulf Coast Intercollegiate Honors Council Conference.*

mesmerized. I simultaneously felt like an alien and an honored guest to a new world. I accepted Mr. Britt's challenge and enrolled in the American Studies program. I was about to embark on the adventure of a lifetime.

Thus began my initiation into the world of honors. The historical lectures by Mr. Britt were absorbing—his lecture style betrayed his passion for his subject. Kathleen Sydnor, the literature instructor for the course, who was just as passionate about her discipline, became a guardian angel to my well-being. Both the instructors and my fellow students were concerned about my health. They cheered me on the days when the pain was almost debilitating, a camaraderie that I had never experienced before. I assumed such a highly intelligent, fraternal group of people would never accept me into their circle. Instead, I discovered a diversified collaboration of people of different ages, backgrounds, and ethnicity working together and helping each other. If one person were in pain, another was there to comfort. If one person were struggling with an assignment, another would volunteer to help. We not only learned to see past our differences but also to respect each other for those differences. My whole perspective on life changed. I developed an interest in multiculturalism that evolved into a seminar paper analyzing how individuals from multicultural backgrounds react to the unique challenges they face in life.

As we approached our topic on World War I, my blood clot hit. I was restricted to bed until further notice. I could not return to class. For months I languished, without anyone but my husband to comfort me. When I finally got better, all I could think of was entering college again. This time, I was fierce in my desire to go. "If I have to," I told Ronnie, "I will crawl my way through the halls." My will steadied me when my legs could not.

I could not get back the Pell Grant I lost when I withdrew from classes because Ronnie had started a new job that made us financially ineligible. I was devastated. My medical bills were daunting. There was no way I could pay for college. Once again, I thought my fate was sealed. When I told Mr. Britt that I could not come back for the fall semester; I almost broke down in tears. The bills were threatening our livelihood, I explained. Yet Mr. Britt would have none of that. He gave me an application for an honors scholarship. I applied and won.

With that arranged, I confronted my doctor with my plans. After checking my legs, he granted me ambulatory status. The class and instructors welcomed me. I maintained my high grade point average. In October of 2002 I presented my American Studies paper at the Texas Gulf Coast Intercollegiate Honors Council's annual conference. Who would have guessed that one day I would stand in front of my peers and distinguished instructors to

present *my* paper. The lecture room was filled with *teachers* representing Honors Programs from all over the Gulf Coast. Nervous, I composed myself, imagining I was an evangelist. The ploy worked, and I received high compliments; one professor asked for a copy and permission to distribute it to his students. I was stunned. *Here I am doing what I dreamed about. Here I am doing the things I thought I could never do.*

The love I developed for American Studies and the Honors Program at Lee College helped keep my spirits bright during these trials. With the support of the honors faculty and students, I learned to make my dreams a reality. My hope is that I can honor their spirit, that I can help others realize their dreams. I changed my major to American Studies, and one day I hope to teach at the university level.

Now I see my life as a pattern. These challenges were placed in my path for a reason. I found strength I never knew I could possess. I found fellowship with others. I found the mentors to help me define my future. I found out how it feels to help others work to achieve their life goals. I find myself rising to walk a few steps closer to my goal, joy and hope beating in my heart. *ndo*

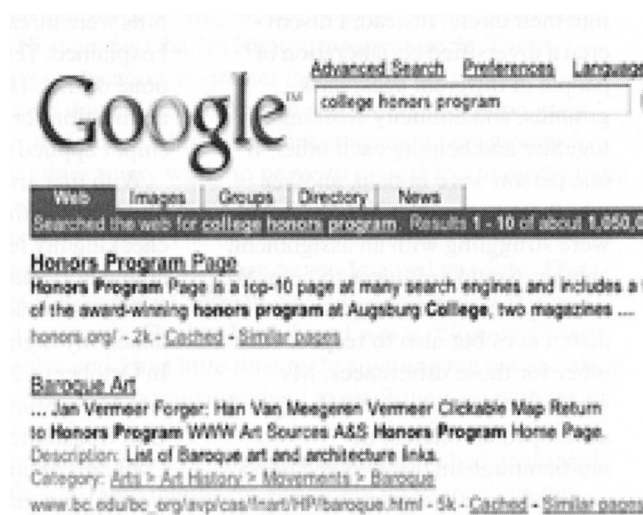
*Larry Crockett*

## Building a Top-Rated Honors Web Page

Since early 1996, Sergey Brin and Larry Page, students at Stanford University, had worked on a search engine called "BackRub." When Andy Bechtolsheim from Sun Microsystems saw a demo of it on the front porch of a faculty member's home early one morning in 1998, he quickly scribbled a check for \$100,000 to "Google, Inc." But Brin and Page had a problem: "Google, Inc." did not exist. The corporation was formed in order to cash the check; Brin and Page could now pay their library fines. In less than five years, "Google" became the dominant provider of network search technology in the world.

As of this writing, the Honors Page of Augsburg College (<http://honors.org>) is the #1-rated "college honors program" page both at Google and at Yahoo!, the premier directory which now uses Google technology. I make sure that the administration at Augsburg knows this fact. In fact, my Dean has asked me several times not to give away "the company secrets." But, in the classic spirit of NCHC collegiality, that is precisely what I propose to do.

With the "dot-com" collapse of 2000, some have imagined that devoting resources to Web page development may be less important for honors colleges and programs than we previously thought. But there is considerable evidence that able high-school students are using the Web more than ever.<sup>1</sup> As of this writing, for example, we have had more electronic applications to our program at this date than we have ever had before.



*Larry Crockett is a professor of Computer Science and the honors director at Augsburg College.*

<sup>1</sup> Michael Lorenzen of Michigan State University has found that use of the Web by high-school students has increased dramatically (<http://www.michaellorenzen.net/>).

## Attracting New Students

The Web is an open system. With a few exceptions, all the work that goes in to developing a successful page is there to see. That is, a person can visit a top-ranked Web site like the Honors Page, shown at right, and see how it was done. The source code is also there to inspect, with one keystroke, so the technically savvy can see the code that generates the page.

I reserved the “honors.org” domain name for our program when I noticed a few years ago that it was available. Remarkably, one PR staffer at Augsburg asked me with a straight face why <http://www.augsburg.edu/courses/honorsprogram.html> was not good enough. I faced the worst fear anyone who teaches for a living can have: how do you explain the transparently obvious? When I see people in a variety of situations, I ask them if they have been to our page. When I relay the address, “honors.org,” I can sense them thinking, “Oh, I can remember that!” If your students cannot easily cite your Web page address, it should be changed—new domain name extensions mean brief, easily remembered names are still available. A domain name now costs less than \$20 a year.

Perhaps one reason that the Honors Page is highly ranked by various search engines is that it is visually appealing. The old rule of thumb is that there should be more space dedicated to images than text. But the images on the Honors Page are not merely aesthetically compelling since they provide lots of information at a glance and links to more pages. The Honors Page title includes our program motto, “Spirited excellence for the new century.” Conspicuous because it is central to the purpose of the page, the “Prospective Students” button features a young woman with a welcoming smile. Indeed, the most important function of the Honors Page is to attract students to our program who might not otherwise consider it. Admissions, of course, is the stream that waters everything else in the program.

A click on the “Prospective Student” image on the opening page takes the browsing student or parent to the “Prospective Student” page, shown below. We sometimes assume that it is obvious why promising students should be interested in honors programs, but

assumptions—*as every practitioner of the liberal arts knows—are often problematical. As a result, the left side of the page explains, “What any good program should do.”* Included is a list of how a program should enhance an education and—importantly, even if perhaps contentiously—why participation in a

program ought to assist students to graduate in four years. We keep in mind that parents have their cost-conscious eyes on the bottom line.

The right side of “Prospective Students” explains why we believe the program at Augsburg exceeds these expectations. If images are important to Web-page success, images of welcoming faces of people prospective students can expect to meet are even more important.<sup>2</sup> It is a sociological truism by now that the transition to college is a traumatic time for both high



## Prospective Student

### What any good program should do:

- \* Provide a challenging and rewarding program of humanities, science studies, and computer studies with an integrated core of interdisciplinary seminars and courses.
- \* Offer this enriched program of study at no extra cost.
- \* Meet general education requirements to help students graduate on time.
- \* Stimulate students to be better students than they would be in the general population of students. Studies show that honors students establish better habits, get better

### Why the Honors Program at Augsburg?

First, the director of the program is **Dr. Larry Crockett**, a computer scientist and philosopher of science who has won four outstanding teaching awards in his career—by vote of the students. He is the winner of NSF grants and has published two books and more than 20 articles. He is active in and has written extensively for the *National College Honors Council*. He has directed the program for 13 of the 17 years he has been at Augsburg and, as a result, has more experience teaching and directing honors than 90% of those working in honors programs today.

He is also a member of the Episcopal clergy and brings a pastoral concern for students in the program, whatever their backgrounds or beliefs. A measure of his effectiveness with students is the number of recommendations he writes each year: more than fifty for graduate school and employment.

Second, the faculty who teach in the program are first-rate, nationally distinguished scholars and

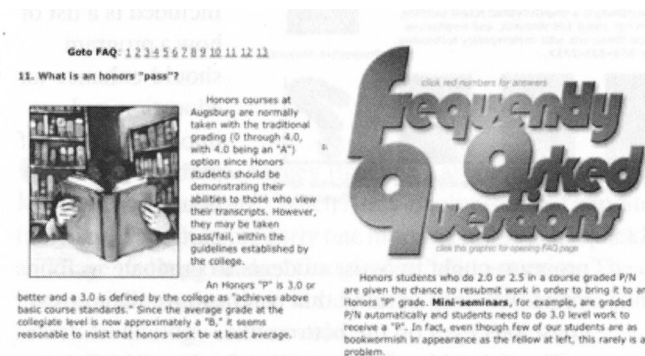


<sup>2</sup>Fischler and Firschein point out, in *Intelligence: The Eye, the Brain, and the Computer* (Reading, 1987), that “the human brain has distinct procedures for processing visual information about faces—a task of great biological importance” (p. 222).



school seniors and parents. As I dropped my daughter off at Luther College in Iowa last fall, I saw a woman sitting on the dorm steps, reddened face buried in her hands, weeping for the daughter she had just deposited in the dorm. Particularly on this part of the page, we attempt to convey a sense to both parents and students that “this will feel good to do.”

A prominent part of successful Web pages for years has been the “Frequently Asked Questions” page or “FAQs.” Searchers bring with them lots of questions and our FAQs page tries to address the most common questions that prospective *and* current students might have. A good FAQs page can answer questions quickly and can help keep enrolled students in the program.



Professional academics might balk at the use of cartoon images or cartoon-like titles. But 17-year-old seniors are still children and the perennial popularity of programs such as “The Simpsons” might convince us that even Princeton-bound students enjoy cartoon imagery. Such imagery does not dominate the Honors Page but we do not shrink from making use of it where it might be effective. You might find, “It’s Here! A Comic Book By Art Students at UM-St. Louis,” instructive on such matters.<sup>3</sup>

Note as well the easy navigation among the questions on the upper-left-hand side of the FAQs page. Effective pages employ easily understood and used navigation. We believe that such navigational ease conveys the critical message, “You will be able to find your way around our program and find what you need.” As one might expect, the course schedule is also on-line and is more current than our print bulletin.

## Web-Based Learning for Current Students

Since we wish to retain our current students just as much as we wish to attract new students, most of the Honors Page is dedicated to making their experience in our program as productive and engaging as we can make it. This year’s freshman, we sometimes forget, is next year’s *prospective* sophomore. Similarly, a graduating senior honors student is a different kind of “prospective,” namely, one who might become part of the donor pool that is so essential to honors program financial health these days.

A prominent feature of the Honors Page is the *Honors Review*, which started life as a print journal nearly fifteen years ago and became a Web-based journal eight years ago. The *Review* serves several purposes. First, it provides a forum for the exchange of excellent undergraduate work. Second, the *Review* is edited by students, with the advice of the Director. Work on the *Review*, which provides honors students at our institution the opportunity to do work that will be seen widely around the world, provides precisely the kinds of “hands on” work that builds honors communities and gives them accomplishments they can cite on those still modest résumés. For the past ten years, when I assemble the ten to fifteen students who will work on the *Review*, I have been intrigued that we usually have just the right number of editors, grammarians, graphics people, and techie-types to put the *Review* together with a modest amount of supervision by the Director. Last, since the *Review* is widely read, it winds up being linked to by other pages—part of my “secret” for getting that top ranking by Google. Indeed, a search of “honors program journal” lists the *Review* as third on Google—we’re working on doing better! In the search engine ratings wars, the old adage, “them that has, gets,” may be grammatically appalling but it is a direct hit on search-engine realities.



<sup>3</sup> <http://www.umsi.edu/~dyounger/chick%20Web/intro.html>.

I will not belabor the lab activity of our NSF-funded Philosophy of Science course since it is described at some length in "Using Technology in the Honors Classroom," which I co-wrote with Larry Clark.<sup>4</sup> Suffice it to say that a Web page, with the full programmability supported by JavaScript and Java applets, facilitates real-time lab explorations of nonlinear phenomena such as population growth and stock market trends. Such development, while effective in an honors science course, admittedly presupposes a measure of programming expertise that may be beyond the reach of some programs. Budding Web-page developers, on the other hand, might well come to the aid of such programs.

But interactive, Web-based learning can be done quite easily in the simple interactivity between *text*, *text area* and *links*, as shown at right. The principal deficiency of having students answer a set of questions in the conventional way is that a set of printed questions sitting alongside a book leaves the student pondering in nineteenth-century isolation. It is better to juxtapose questions, text and links to resources on screen so that a potentially passive activity becomes much more active. Active students, of course—other things being equal—learn more than those working with non-dynamic media.

**Question:** Here the author attempts to maintain a distinction that others have denied as he compares *Kristallnacht* with the current situation. What is the distinction he wants to maintain and how does it aid his argument. What phrase announces the conclusion for this section?

I think that the author is saying that many people, because they are acting on their fears, have jumped to conclusions by believing that there are many parallels between the current time and the night of Kristallnacht in Germany.

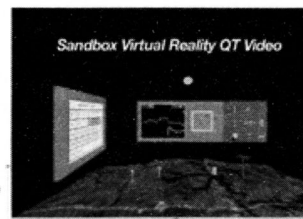
Links in this question provide resources for the student in case she or he needs clarification of the terms "distinction," "argument" or "conclusion." Any number of terms can be referenced this way so that the student has easy access for solving problems before they get in the way of academic progress; the *link*, an idea which remarkably dates to the late 1940s, remains the most powerful advantage of Web pages over conventional books.

Moreover, links can be to any resource on the Web with its cornucopia of dynamic resources. In the image above and to the right, students access the "Sandbox Virtual Reality" video, and are asked questions they can answer only when they have watched the QuickTime video. With its scroll bar, the video can be rewound and reviewed arbitrarily, a decided advantage over watching a DVD-based video in class. As long as Web material is

merely linked to and not copied into an honors program educational page, no copyright issues are joined. If it is desirable for students to have access to material that is copyrighted but on the same screen, a split screen can be built using frames, with the content frame, for

Click on the image at right to view the Sandbox VR movie, keeping these questions in mind to answer (you might prefer to use QuickTime player directly and access this: <ftp://ftp.evl.uic.edu/pub/software/andy/QT/SANDBOX.mov>).

12. What is VR and how does it use a stored database?
13. What does an instrument do?
14. Are instruments free from the influence of theories?
15. What are the three kinds of data?
16. How passive or active is the researcher in the sandbox? In science generally?



example, linking to the desired content page which remains elsewhere on the Web. For such reasons, in the six years since we received our National Science Foundation grant to put the honors program on a computational footing at Augsburg, the pedagogy of the program has become significantly Web-based. Indeed, I cannot imagine the program without the Web.

### Confronting the Technical Issues: Advice for Non-Technical Directors

As Professor of Computer Science at my institution, I arguably have some advantage over directors from the humanities or professional studies. But it is less than some might suppose. Virtually everything I have learned about Web development I learned since I obtained my Ph.D., and most of what I learned in graduate school has no bearing on contemporary Web development. Computer technology changes quickly enough that in some sense we are all novices, continually attempting to do things that we initially do not know how to do. When my new version of Dreamweaver or Photoshop arrives, I too must work through the manuals or CD-based tutorials; knowing the theory of computation, for example, is laughably irrelevant. All users must confront the sometimes-significant learning curves entailed by such software. An eager novice, in fact, can often make faster progress than the Web-surfeited veteran.

Directors and other honors staff often imagine that competing in the Web-page sweepstakes is mostly a matter of deep competency in JavaScript or Flash, two Web technologies. But this is not true. Honors faculty and students are skilled already with the spoken and written word and a great Honors Web page should contain lots of engaging text. Perhaps 80% of a

<sup>4</sup>Cheryl L. Fuiks and Larry Clark, *Teaching and Learning in Honors* (NCHC, 2000).



compelling page is simply exceptional text and great images imaginatively juxtaposed. A visual layout editor such as Dreamweaver facilitates such layout—it works much like a word processor—and can be learned by most people with a little determination.<sup>5</sup> If this sounds like a lot of work, students can certainly do much of this, but there is a good case to be made for Honors staff doing at least some of the work directly so it is authoritative and properly maintained. A program's page, notably, is its face to the world.

Images attract the eye and there is no substitute for having the very best image editor. For many developers, that remains Adobe Photoshop, but considerable success can be had with other programs as well. If your staff does not have a Photoshop buff, then almost certainly you can find a student with such skills. Sometimes visitors to the Honors Page ask where we get our images. Primarily, we either base them on photographs we take or we get them from a collection of 60 CDs that contain over a million images. Usually such collections can be purchased for about \$50-100.

Students working on the *Honors Review* routinely ask me about using images from the Web. Google's image search is very good and will often have approximately the desired image idea. Images on the Web, however, are copyrighted so the rule of thumb I use with my students who want to use such images is: go ahead and do your Photoshop manipulations of Web-derived images; if I

can no longer see a resemblance between the original and the Photoshop-modified image, then use it. Even though it is a rude fact of Photoshop life that most manipulations degrade an image, filters can sometimes usefully transform images so that better images result and copyright violations are avoided. But directors should be aware that the potential for infringement is great.

Getting high-rankings on search engines such as Google is partly long-term determination to achieve such rankings and partly good luck.<sup>6</sup> As noted above, Google search technology increasingly dominates the Web; Google's "secret" is that it filters irrelevant results that have dogged conventional search engines for a long time. Accordingly, optimizing specifically for Google should now be the principal goal of Web page development.<sup>7</sup> Optimizing a page for search-engine rankings is probably a task beyond the interests and capabilities of most directors, but computer science majors in honors programs should be able to grapple with this challenge. As we saw at the outset, students at Stanford developed Google in the late 1990s and therein lies a lesson that we occasionally forget: good students working collaboratively bring fresh minds and novel approaches to perennial problems. Of course, honors directors understand this fact to be the heart of the honors enterprise. ncho

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<sup>5</sup> Of course, Microsoft Word can save documents as HTML files. The problem is that the code quality of such pages is usually poor. Dreamweaver, in fact, has a "clean up Word HTML" command. Even then, such pages are unimpressive and difficult to modify.

<sup>6</sup> A good source for search engine news and strategies for getting higher rankings on search engines is at Search Engine Watch (<http://searchenginewatch.com>).

<sup>7</sup> One resource for determining how Google generates its database and therefore its rankings is at [http://www.searchengineworld.com/spiders/google\\_faq.htm](http://www.searchengineworld.com/spiders/google_faq.htm)

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**The 2nd Annual NCHC Presidential Leadership Award was presented at the 2002 conference in Salt Lake City.**

**President Constantine Papadakis of Drexel University was the recipient.**

**We congratulate Dr. Papadakis and the Honors Program at Drexel University.**



# EXPLORATION

*David Reibstein*

## Use of the Internet to Collect Elusive Honors Data

### Introduction

The maintenance and continual improvement of an Honors program depends to a great extent on having accurate and timely data about the program's students. Such data are necessary to monitor the progress of students, the fulfillment of their Honors requirements, and the contributions they are making to the academic and wider communities, as well as to predict future needs for honors courses and to give feedback to the students themselves.

A recent article in this publication (Smith, 2002) offered an extensive list of data that an honors college or program would want to collect. In this paper I describe a system that has proved efficient for us in the collection of certain types of data. The system is designed to efficiently collect data which is obtainable in no other way, or which would be time-consuming to compile for a large group of students. This data-collection system is part of the implementation of the Albert Dorman Honors College's Five-year Strategic Plan, adopted in 2001.

### Background

The Albert Dorman Honors College (ADHC) at the New Jersey Institute of Technology (NJIT) enrolls over 500 students. Honors students have opportunities and requirements with regard to number and distribution of honors courses; maintenance of grade point average; campus or community service; and attendance at Honors Colloquia. In addition, we strongly encourage our students to participate in research and other kinds of academic projects outside of classes. In order to monitor this activity, we need data about student performance in these categories.

*David Reibstein is the Associate Dean of the Albert Dorman Honors College at the New Jersey Institute of Technology in Newark, a position he has occupied since January 2001. Previously he was Outreach Director at Princeton University, and before that Assistant Director of the College of General Studies at the University of Pennsylvania. He holds a Bachelor's degree from Penn and a Ph.D. from the University of Chicago, both in Biochemistry. He has taught Chemistry at Penn, Princeton, and Bryn Mawr College.*

*As Associate Dean, Reibstein is responsible for the functioning of the Honors College, as well as contributing to the development and implementation of long-range strategic goals.*



New Jersey Institute of Technology



It has been particularly challenging to capture data about students' service activities and participation in research, since there is no official record of such information. While course data can be obtained from existing records, sorting out and collating such information for 500 students is very time consuming. Moreover, students themselves need feedback about their progress in meeting requirements.

To address these multiple needs, in the spring of 2002, working with NJIT's Computer Services Division, we placed a web version of a survey on a secured (SSL) password-protected interactive web page linked to the ADHC web site. All Honors students were required to fill out the form.

The motivation for changing from a paper-based to a web-based survey was three-fold: (1) to make it easy, convenient, and even pleasant for the students to respond; (2) to allow us to keep track of who had and had not submitted the survey; and (3) to facilitate handling the enormous amount of data. The results reported here show that we succeeded in all objectives. The response rate has been extremely high, and we were easily able to download the data and import it into a database program for analysis with no manual entry necessary.

### The Survey

Students were informed of the survey by email and by placing an announcement and a link on the ADHC home page (<http://honors.njit.edu>) in early Spring 2002. Announcements were also made at many student gatherings. Students were given a deadline to comply, and those students not filling out the form by the deadline were sent another email and a letter.

The 2001-02 survey form can be seen at <https://www2.njit.edu/honors/renewal>. The form begins

with identifying questions such as name, ID number, major and class year. It then goes on to ask the students about the following activities during the previous academic year:

#### *Research and other projects carried out*

#### *Campus and community service undertaken*

Students were provided space to enter descriptions of each activity, three fields each for research and service. This is data not previously available to us by any other method.

**Table 1** - Examples of research and other projects reported by ADHC students

Lab/computer research with a professor
Library research for a professor
Computer programming or data analysis for a professor
Assisting a professor with course development
Lab research at another institution
Co-ops and internships with industry and nonprofits

Additionally, the form requests the following information:

#### *Honors courses taken and grades obtained*

#### *Courses taken to fulfill a minor or second major*

#### *Graduate courses taken*

#### *Honors colloquia attended*

#### *Email addresses*

This latter set of data is available from university records, but is much more efficiently processed when assembled in this format.

**Table 2** - Examples of community and campus service reported by ADHC students

Course-related community service
Service with cultural/arts groups
Fraternity/sorority service and leadership positions
Honors College Committees
Honors College Event(s)
Honors College Government
Honors Newsletter
Technology Observer Magazine of ADHC
Off-campus service
Environmental activities
Service through religious organizations
Student Government
Student club or association officer
Varsity Athletics
NJIT student newspaper

### Results

By the end of July, over 92% of the students had responded, leaving just a small number to be further motivated to comply. By the start of the fall term, those students who had not responded were readily persuaded to fill out the form, and the final response rate was close to 100%. This is an exceptional response rate for any survey, by any standard.

The data were downloaded directly from a password-protected Results Web Page into a database that had previously been populated with the names and identification numbers (IDs) of all ADHC students. Downloaded data were matched to the existing records using the ID as a match field.

As an example of the wealth of data collected, we found that our students reported a wide range of activities in research, internships, and projects with faculty, and engaged in an enormous range of service activities.

From these data it was a relatively simple matter to create reports for the ADHC student population as a whole, as well as compiling a record for each individual student. Using this compilation, we were able to distinguish students who were on track with their requirements from those few who appeared to be deficient in any of the areas surveyed. These latter students were notified of their deficits by email. Thus, the instrument provides feedback to every ADHC student about his/her progress every year.

### Conclusion

These data serve as a baseline against which we can measure future progress on honors components such as research, service, courses taken and colloquia attended. An important benefit of the survey is that we

can match a student identity to each record. Therefore, as we continue to conduct this survey each year, we can track the progress of every individual Honors student throughout their NJIT career, keep all students informed of their progress, and measure our overall progress toward achieving our objectives.

The amount of staff time devoted to compiling the data was greatly reduced from that needed to transcribe paper forms. We will continue to refine the survey and add new questions as needed.

Finally, it will be obvious that all data collected in such surveys is student-reported, and thus depends entirely on students' honesty. NJIT operates under an honor code, and such integrity is just what the honor code is designed to promote.

*I am pleased to acknowledge the Computing Services Division at NJIT for assistance in mounting the survey on the NJIT web and creating the Results Web Page. I also wish to thank the over 500 Albert Dorman Honors College students who completed the survey.*

### Work Cited

- Smith, Michelle R. 2002. "Setting Up Data Bases to Keep Track of Honors Students," *The National Honors Report*, XXIII (2), Summer 2002, pp. 21-25.

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## Common Ground

NCHC is an organization that reflects the diversity of its membership: from community colleges to graduate institutions, from small schools to large, public and private, urban and rural. Despite our differences, there has always been one question that brings us together. How can we provide the highest undergraduate education for our students? While we may disagree on the best answer to this question, we seem to find common ground in the belief that NCHC can help us provide this excellent education. Thus, at the 2003 conference, we encourage discussion of our diversity and our common ground—in our beliefs and values, in our ethnicities, in our choices, in our experiences as citizens of the academic community and of the world, in our educations, and in our professional commitment to honors education and NCHC. We welcome you to join us as we explore and rethink both our diversity and our common ground in Chicago, a city of almost endlessly diverse neighbors, art, architecture, food, and music—a city that finds common ground in its civic pride and strong spirit.

**Date: November 5-9, 2003**  
**Where: Palmer House, Chicago, IL**

### For Your Information...

I will pass along two things. First, at the University of South Carolina, USC students have earned about 3.5 million dollars in national scholarships and awards over the past 8 years. 70% of the students winning these awards were in the Honors College. Many of these were for graduate study. Our students make up about 8% of the undergraduate student body. Many of the non-honors students winning awards were graduate students. I expect other programs and colleges have similar statistics.

Second, a mother visiting with her son asked me whether "being in the Honors College" would help her son get into medical school. I replied, "No. Being in the Honors College won't help him at all. Doing the Honors College will help him help himself."

The obvious point is that many parents (and students) think that the mere accolade of membership itself should give a boost. I try to stress that we provide the opportunities for a student to make him or herself into a competitive candidate. As Yoda might say, "Don't just be; do!"

*-from Peter Sederberg (South Carolina Honors College)*

*John H. Jones*

## **Recognizing Honors Students upon Graduation: Some Approaches**

When selling students on an honors education, honors program directors often point to the challenging curriculum, the small class sizes, the dynamic learning experiences both in and outside the classroom, and the access to special facilities available to honors students. These arguments, however, are sometimes met with blank stares, because many prospective students would rather know less about the qualitative differences between an honors education and a conventional one and more about the concrete benefits that an honors education can bring in terms of special recognition for their achievement and, perhaps, greater marketability in the job search following graduation. Students, rightly or wrongly, often feel that enrolling in an honors program means that they are exposing their GPAs to greater risk, and they want to know what they will get in return that will compensate them for having taken that risk. Having an interest in how other honors programs satisfy their students' needs in this regard, I posted, about a year ago, the following query to the Honors Listserv:

We expect to honor our graduates at commencement with diplomas that recognize their accomplishments in the Honors Program and with some sort of medallion, cord, or pin for the ceremony. I'm interested in knowing what any of your programs do specifically in terms of what is written on the diploma and what kind of regalia item is given to the graduates.

Within a day or two, thirty respondents from twenty-nine honors programs answered. Although my query and the responses can hardly be considered a formal survey, the variety of institutions represented and the many forms of recognition given to students can reasonably be considered a cross section of the alternatives available. While many of these responses were printed in the Spring 2002 issue of *The National Honors Report*, I've collected them all into the following table for, I hope, more convenient perusal.

In the left column, I list each of the twenty-nine schools, starting with the four-year schools and then the two-year schools. Using the abbreviations from *Peterson's Guide to Honors Programs and Colleges*, third edition, 2002, compiled by Joan Digby, I organize the schools by their designations as public or private and as small, medium, or large.<sup>1</sup> I had hoped that this organization might lead to distinctions among the different types of schools, but no apparent distinction seems to have emerged. Instead, the table shows that while colleges and universities use a great variety of forms of recognition, certain preferences for particular forms appear.

*John H. Jones is the director of Jacksonville State University, College of Arts and Sciences Honors Program located in Jacksonville, Alabama.*

Following the column listing the different colleges and universities are columns for the eight regalia items that respondents reported, three forms of ceremonial recognition, and three forms of official certification. Of the eight types of regalia items used, sixteen of the twenty-nine schools use some form of medal or medallion, by far the most popular form of regalia item. Other choices include stoles, which are used by four schools, cords used by another four schools, tassels in two schools, and hoods, epaulets, sashes, and rings used by one school each. Four programs use more than one form of regalia item, usually because they want to make a distinction between different versions of their curriculum, like a two-year core honors distinction as opposed to the completion of a four-year curriculum. Reasons noted for choosing any particular item involved cost, which varied greatly from respondent to respondent, even for the same type of regalia item, and an attempt to make the award stand out against all the other awards and distinctions students receive, like cords for Latin honors. Overall, the medal or medallion option seems most likely both to be distinct and to cost a relatively modest amount.

With regard to ceremonial recognition, sixteen of the twenty-nine programs reported that they recognize their honors graduates in some way at some sort of ceremony. Twelve schools hold a separate ceremony, like an honors banquet where the regalia item is given to their graduates prior to commencement, while seven make special mention of their graduates at graduation, and seven include a designation on the commencement program. Seven of the sixteen programs use more than one of the three forms of ceremonial recognition mentioned, with three schools using all three. What is interesting, here, is that the most expensive form of recognition, the separate ceremony or banquet, is the most common form of ceremonial recognition. Some reasons mentioned by respondents include the desire to have a special event for honors graduates and difficulty in persuading university administrators of the need for special recognition at graduation. The expense of a special ceremony may, however, represent a sound investment because of its very specialness, since it may be particularly effective in maintaining strong ties with students as they become alumni.

Not surprisingly, the most common of all forms of recognition for graduates do not so much involve ceremonial ritual but establish the graduate's achievement in some form of written record, as represented by the last three columns. Thirteen schools note the student's achievement with a mention on the transcript, eleven on the diploma, and eight on a special certificate. The most overlap occurred in this area, with ten of the twenty-nine schools using more than one form of written recognition. Stated reasons involve the practical

need for students to verify their achievement for prospective employers and graduate and professional programs. This is hardly surprising, given the importance that our culture places on written documentation and certification. While medallions and awards ceremonies help to publicly recognize the students within the college or university and to build ties with new alumni, the written record of achievement will give a more long-term benefit to the students as they make their way in the world beyond college.

Respondents made at least three very important points that do not show up in the table. Several people, like Mark Anderson of SUNY, Brockport and Charlie Slavin of the University of Maine, questioned the proliferation of awards and medals and wondered whether such a practice "goes hand in hand with grade inflation and pervasive feelings of entitlement" (Anderson). Even so, the very same respondents expressed support for the giving of awards to outstanding students, the category into which most honors students fall. Others, like Esther Materón-Arum of the University of Baltimore and Donna Birdwell-Sykes of Lamar University, warn of the dangers of awards and ceremonies in a growing program. What seems like an affordable way to honor students can become an expensive burden as the number of graduates increases over time. As Birdwell-Sykes cautions, "Think ahead and plan for something that will fit where you hope to be in ten years." Of the thirty responses, one came from a student, Morgan Goot from SUNY, Potsdam, who recommends student involvement in the awards decision-making process. Such input, she notes, can make university officials aware of what the students' preferences are and aid in the negotiation process. She is also shrewd to point out the limitations of such negotiations. "It really depends on the openness of the administration, the size of the institution, and what exactly you feel is appropriate," she writes.

Although our plans are not quite finalized yet, the awards decisions here at JSU have gone quite smoothly. Although we can't recognize students' achievements on their diplomas because there's no extra space on them, we can recognize them at graduation both on the program and during the ceremony, and not to buck the trend, we've decided on a tasteful but inexpensive medallion from a local trophy shop for the graduates to wear. It also appears likely that we will be able to get some mention of their achievement noted on their transcripts, which employers and graduate admissions people will see. As time goes on and we see how many graduates we are likely to have in any given year, we may add a special awards dinner or ceremony complete with special certificate. Part of the credit for the ease of the decision-making process goes to the

members of our administration who appreciate the academic achievement of our honors students. The bulk of the credit, however, must go to my colleagues in

honors who have given me the benefit of their experience, enabling me to ask the right questions of the right people and get started on the right track from the beginning. *rho*

Institution	Medallion	Mention at Commence.	Commence. Program	Separate Ceremony	On Diploma	Separate Cert.	On Transc.	Other
East Tenn. State U. 4 Pu S	X for honors in discipln.				X		X	Stole for univ-wide honors
SUNY Oswego 4 Pu S							X	Tassel
U of Baltimore 4 Pu S							X	Cords
Columbia Coll 4 Pr S	X				X	X	X	
St. Francis U 4 Pr S			X	X	X			
The Citadel 4 Pr S					X	X		
Schreiner Univ. 4 Pr S		X		X	X			Ring
E. Stroudsburg U 4 Pu M			X	X		X	X	Stole
Lamar Univ 4 Pu M	X							
Longwood College 4 Pu M	X							
SE Louisiana 4 Pu M	X	X			X (middle and highest levels)			
SUNY Brockport 4 Pu M	X			X			X	
SUNY Potsdam 4 Pu M	X	X	X	X			X	
Univ of Maine 4 Pu M	X			X				
UNC Wilmington 4 Pu M	X			X (full program)	x (full program)			
U Southern Miss 4 Pu M	X							
U Tenn Chattanooga 4 Pu M	X		X		X			

*Edward R. Kemery*  
*Melinda J. Frederick*  
*Nelson Kofie*  
*Susan Carrafiello*

## **Teaching Honors on the Web: Challenges, Opportunities, and Early Experiences**

With the almost mind boggling speed at which information technology has developed over the recent years, so too have opportunities and challenges for higher education. In the past two decades, information technology available for teaching and learning has evolved from stand-alone desktop computers (with only two floppy drives) to sophisticated computer networks linking computers in the office, classroom, and home, with the internet and web-based educational delivery systems. Opportunities created by technology improvements include new ways of structuring courses and providing course information, and the ability to offer courses “24/7.” Along with these opportunities, there are also challenges that present themselves for faculty and students. The faculty role changes, as courses become more student-centered and less instructor-centered. This too means that students must take more responsibility for their learning.

Improvements in information technology have had an impact on how education is delivered. Lectures and student presentations now can be enhanced with PowerPoint© slideshows, visits to websites, or by viewing satellite-downlinked programs. These same technology improvements also allow schools to offer courses or even entire curricula on the internet with courseware such as Blackboard and WebCT.

With a few exceptions, two of which are discussed below, it seems as though honors programs lag behind their university counterparts in adopting web technology. Approximately a year ago, Dr. Kemery inquired over the honors listserv about honors programs using web technology to teach courses. This inquiry produced only a few affirmative responses, suggesting that a paucity of honors faculty were using web technology in their courses. Nearly a year later, there are more schools teaching honors on the web – in face-to-face and web courses. One school even offers all honors requirements through the web (Schlenker, 2002).

*Dr. Edward R. Kemery is an associate professor of Management and honors program director at the University of Baltimore, Baltimore, Maryland. Dr. Melinda J. Frederick is the honors program coordinator and Dr. Nelson Kofie is the assistant honors program director at Prince George's Community College, Largo, Maryland. Dr. Frederick is also an associate professor of Political Science; Dr. Kofie is an associate professor in Sociology. Dr. Susan Carrafiello, an associate professor of History at Wright State University in Dayton, Ohio, serves as its honors program director.*

### ***What Does Teaching Honors on the Web Mean?***

Teaching honors on the web can range from using web-based technology to enhance a face-to-face course, to delivering an entire course on-line. As faculty become more knowledgeable about web technology, they are more likely to develop novel ways to use this technology in their courses. There are a number of ways the web can be used to enhance a face-to-face honors course, such as assignments requiring students to access, evaluate and discuss web-based information, and using collaborative web tools for student-student and student-faculty interaction.

Here are two examples of how web technology was used to enhance a face-to-face honors seminar at the University of Baltimore. One was a planned course activity; the other an outgrowth of a student complaint. The honors seminar, "We the People, In a Brave New World," focused on topics related to the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on New York's World Trade Center. One of the planned course activities required students to select a topic from a US newspaper and use the internet to locate that same topic in newspapers from several different countries. By comparing articles, a student was able to identify similarities and differences in how the topic was reported.

The unplanned activity was based on weekly journals students wrote and posted for the instructor on the course web board. Journal content was based on student reflections from the week's topic, and when class time permitted, some of the points made by students in their journals were discussed. Shortly after mid-semester, during class, a student remarked that he was jealous because the instructor was the only one permitted to read the journals. After a brief discussion, most other students agreed with him so a process was developed for

students to share their thoughts with each other. The plan was for the students to pair up. The following week, one student in the pair would post a journal, after which the partner would respond, beginning a dialogue on the web board. Each week, the students' roles reversed. Other class members, at their own discretion, were permitted to join in on others' dialogues. The level of discourse generated by this process was remarkable, going well beyond what would occur in the classroom. Some of the dialogue even spilled over into the classroom, the hallways, and the honors lounge.

### ***Why Use Web Technology in an Honors Course***

There are a number of reasons why an instructor should consider using web technology in an honors course. Perhaps the most important reason is that the technology offers an opportunity for creativity in course delivery allowing a professor to develop other interesting ways to achieve course goals. With the ever-increasing technology savvy of students, it stands to reason that they would welcome being able to use this savvy to assist their learning.

Students have come to expect that a certain amount of information technology will be used in courses. For example, many professors routinely place their course syllabi on the web for easy student access. It also is common for professors to use web boards to share documents with students. Web board technology can also be used for student teams to have a private place to communicate asynchronously and share information. If non-honors professors are doing these sorts of things in increasing numbers, then honors students will expect these enhancements in their honors courses.

Web technology also increases the potential for collaboration in

offering honors courses. With the ubiquity of the internet, collaboration is not limited just to local experts. Rather, experts from around the globe could partner with honors professors to enrich an honors course. Furthermore, collaboration could involve honors students in different programs working together on assignments.

Virtual access to course material and web board discussion areas should prove to enhance honors course dialogue. Additionally, the quasi-permanent nature of web board postings should provide research opportunities for faculty. It is widely accepted that discussions in a face-to-face honors course are very rewarding for those in attendance. Sometimes these discussions produce extremely interesting insights. Other than for those taking notes or those with an excellent tracking facility, these insights often fade from memory. This would not happen if there were records of the discussions. By fostering discussions on a web board, students and faculty would have virtual access to the discussions, permitting unlimited access, posting of considered responses, and reading and re-reading discussion threads to achieve optimal understanding. Furthermore, after a revelation, students can log on and post their thoughts, rather than having to wait until the next class. By then the idea might be forgotten or the student might not be given an opportunity to share it.

Having a record of honors course discussions gives professors opportunities to review their content from a research standpoint. These discussions, like transcripts, can be used to develop and test research hypotheses about how honors students go about evaluating an issue, and could be used, for example, to compare honors and non-honors dialogue.

### ***Why Offer On-Line Honors Courses?***

A necessary precondition for offering on-line honors courses is a stable technology infrastructure. This implies that the school has a vested interest in on-line course delivery, and there are professors who have experience in offering on-line courses. These professors can be recruited to offer honors courses, or to serve as valuable resources for honors faculty. Given the necessary infrastructure, specific reasons to offer on-line courses include scheduling flexibility/convenience and inclusiveness.

Flexibility afforded by on-line honors course offerings overcomes scheduling obstacles. This is true from the perspective of administrators, faculty, and students. Offering an honors course on-line means that there is no classroom to schedule, no specific time to meet, and both faculty and students can fit the course into their existing schedule. Having an honors course on-line also means that students who would not otherwise choose to become a part of an honors program, might opt to do so. This is particularly true of non-traditional students who, for a variety of reasons, may not otherwise be able to schedule limited honors course offerings into their schedule.

***“Our honors students do not just enroll in these courses—they stay in them. The retention rates are as good as or better than our regular classroom honors courses.”***

### ***Challenges of Teaching/Learning On-Line***

Teaching or taking a course either partially or fully on-line presents many challenges for both the professor and the student. Both need to be ready to take the roles necessary to create and benefit from a quality learning environment (Kemery, 2000). For faculty, readiness means that they are comfortable using the technology, they have created a course structure that leverages the technology, and they are ready to put in additional time beyond what would be expected from a face-to-face offering. Simply put, teaching an on-line course is not just posting a tried-and-true syllabus from a traditional course. An on-line course should be designed to use available technology to enrich the learning experience. Examples of this include the creation of small groups whose members work together on an issue and then report out to the rest of the class, or pair up with another group and debate their position. Another aspect of faculty readiness involves a shift in role for faculty. In the on-line environment, instructors have much less perceived control over the course and its unfolding dynamics. Guidance and facilitation are two key components of on-line teaching.

For students taking an on-line course, readiness means that they must have already mastered the technology skills necessary to succeed (and have a computer, software, and connectivity available). More importantly, though, a student must have the maturity to learn in an environment

without the structure of a face-to-face course. What this means is that the student is much more responsible for their learning in the on-line “classroom.” To succeed on-line, students must be highly self-motivated and have excellent time-management skills.

Perhaps the greatest challenge for faculty and students is overcoming problems associated with transactional distance (Murphy & Collins, 1997). Transactional distance refers to gaps among faculty and students created primarily from asynchronous on-line interaction. When in a face-to-face course, faculty and students alike are governed by years of social conditioning. From this conditioning, we are motivated to respond to behavioral cues. Unfortunately, there are no behavioral cues in cyberspace, where the closest thing to a behavioral cue is e-mail. E-mail, however, does not have the same motivational power as an in-person interaction. It is much easier to ignore an e-mail communication than it is to ignore someone in class with you. Even instructor-imposed deadlines do not seem to hold the same motivational power on-line as they do in a face-to-face course.

Despite the myriad of challenges presented by teaching and learning in an on-line environment, several early experiences suggest that this medium is viable for offering honors courses. Honors faculty from Prince George’s Community College in Maryland and Wright State University provide insight from on-line courses at their schools.



## Part I: Online Honors at Prince George's Community College

By Melinda Frederick  
and Nelson Kofie

### Overview

Despite the expansion of distance learning in institutions of higher education nationally, teaching honors online in colleges and universities is still in its infancy. Resistance to instructional technology in college honors programs may be due to a variety of factors including, but not limited to, lack of technology resources, training opportunities, institutional support and demand by students. In addition, traditional concepts of honors courses as being small, interactive seminar-based learning experiences may be resistant to new teaching models. This article explores the rationale for and experience with offering honors courses online at Prince George's Community College over the past two semesters.

### Background

The Honors Program at Prince George's Community College has approximately 575 students, whose demographic profile mirrors the general student population in the college. Our college is a non-residential, commuter campus. Two-thirds of the honors students are female; 49% are non-traditional, returning students 24 years of age or older; and nearly 75% are African American. Throughout the college overall, approximately 75% of the 12,600 credit earning students attend college part-time, dividing their time between work and educational attainment. (Office of Institutional Research, September 18, 2002)

In response to the specific needs of our honors student population at Prince George's Community College, the honors program has attempted to offer courses in the evening and online while maintaining a predominantly daytime curriculum. Each semester, the honors program offers between 22-27 honors sections in general education requirements with approximately 200-300 students enrolled in honors courses each semester. In the Spring 2002, we offered two (12.5%) online and five (20%) evening courses out of 25 total honors sections. In the Fall 2002, we offered one (4%) online and six (22%) evening honors courses out of 27 total honors sections. Our desire is to gradually expand online and evening honors offerings while maintaining our daytime course offerings.

### Getting Started

Our college has a growing Center for Distance Learning with more than 130 sections of online courses offered in the Spring 2003 semester. To quickly introduce online honors into our Spring and Fall 2002 course offerings, the honors program recruited three honors faculty who had already been trained to teach online courses to adapt their honors syllabi to the online environment. These courses were in Anthropology, Computer Information Systems and Psychology. This enabled us to utilize the dual skills and experience of the honors faculty.

### Preliminary Findings

Based upon our preliminary experience with honors online courses, we have found that there are advantages and disadvantages. Online honors courses offer non-traditional students the flexibility, access and educational rigor that they seek outside the traditional classroom experience. Students who performed best in our honors online courses were those who had access to computers, good reading comprehension, were self-motivated, had excellent time management skills, and worked well independently.

On the other hand, students who performed less well in the honors online courses were those who did not have easy access to a computer, who were not visual learners, who relied more on aural or interactive learning found in a traditional classroom, who needed the structure of a class environment to keep on track, who lacked discipline, and who underestimated the time required of an online honors course. These findings were similar in students enrolled in non-honors online courses.

### Summary

In conclusion, our preliminary experience indicates that honors online courses work well for some students but poorly for others. Online courses build research, writing and technology skills, which all students need from an undergraduate education. They extend learning opportunities and offer alternative ways of acquiring knowledge. They should be part of a *complement* of course offerings available to honors students while not replacing the traditional honors classroom experience.

## Part II: Online Honors at Wright State University

*By Susan Carrafiello*

It is a commonplace that honors programs and colleges thrive on innovative teaching. The University Honors Program (UHP) of Wright State University in Dayton, Ohio, is no exception to this rule. Most recently, the UHP has added online, web-only courses to its honors curriculum. These courses have proven to be highly attractive to students and instructors alike. They open, with some reservations, a promising new avenue for honors teaching.

Named after the Wright brothers, Wright State University enrolls over 12,000 undergraduate students. The University Honors Program (UHP) is nearly as old as the University itself, and is in fact celebrating its 30th anniversary this year. Enrollment in the UHP is limited to students who meet certain criteria upon admission to the university or to continuing students who have a G.P.A. of 3.0 or higher. The program serves approximately 850 undergraduates from all colleges, and about 80 students annually earn one of three possible honors designations: University, Departmental, or General Studies Honors Scholar.

WSU honors students must take at least eight honors courses to earn the designation of University or General Studies Honors scholar. These courses must be a combination of honors sections of required general education courses, special 200 level honors general education substitution courses, and 400 level junior/senior honors seminars. The UHP offers at least 75 courses per year to meet the demand from the 850 students engaged in the program. Nevertheless, the honors courses at WSU fill up quickly, and honors students constantly face the challenge of completing their

honors program requirements in a timely fashion. They find it especially difficult to fit in special honors courses once they enter their junior and senior years.

In Winter 2002, one of our long-time instructors suggested offering an online UH400 honors seminar. His idea seemed a good one, as it promised an innovative approach to honors teaching and learning. It also seemed to offer an opportunity to make much-needed UH400 honors seminars available to junior and senior honors students. Since those first two courses were offered, six more online, web-only courses have been taught or are currently being taught. Three were offered in Spring 2002, one in Fall 2002, and two in Winter 2003. Four different liberal arts faculty from Political Science, History, and English have served as instructors in these courses, including one history course that I teach. Three more online honors courses are on tap for the Spring and Summer quarters of 2003, and we anticipate at least two online honors courses in Fall 2003.

Clearly, then, online honors courses are here to stay in the Wright State University honors program. These courses are extremely popular with our honors students. And the students that take them are not "distant" honors students. They are on-site honors students who enroll in online honors courses for a variety of practical reasons.

On-site students in fact clamored for these courses, so much so that our closed course demand reports reveal that they were consistently requested more than any other comparable honors courses. In Winter 2002, for example, students tried to register 55 times after the online UH400 course closed. Even after we opened a second online section of the same course, students tried to enroll 19 more times. In our other two comparable

UH400 courses that quarter, students only made three attempts to register after both of them closed.

Our honors students do not just enroll in these courses—they stay in them. The retention rates are as good as or better than our non-honors classroom courses. Only 7%, or 12 of the 174 total students enrolled in eight online honors courses between Winter 2002 and Winter 2003, dropped. Just 8%, or 25 of the 300 students enrolled in 16 comparable on-site courses, left those courses. And not a single student out of 44 dropped out of the online sections of UH400 in Winter 2002, although one of the 29 students enrolled in the two non-web-based course sections dropped. In Spring 2002, nine of the 79 students enrolled in the four on-site HST103 courses dropped while none of the 28 enrolled in the web-only course dropped.

Our honors course evaluations help explain these positive enrollment and retention patterns. More than anything else, our honors students cited flexibility and convenience as strengths of the online learning environment. Not surprisingly, the "ability to do work when most convenient" and being able to "work at my own pace" appealed to them. They also found these courses "easy to put into schedule," so much so that one student in a UH400 course noted that the online course allowed "a busy individual to take part in a course that they might not have...while at the same time getting honors credit because it is difficult to fit some honors courses in your schedule."

Students also praised the independence of learning the online courses allowed them. Several students in a UH400 seminar used the phrase "independent thinking" to describe a strength of the course. One student in an online honors history course noted that "this class also made me think of things in a

different way than I had before because I was forced into independent thinking instead of having a professor's opinion forced on me." Another student in the same course simply commented that "being online...forces you to be an independent student."

Clearly, the vast majority of our honors students enjoyed their online honors courses. I would argue that this is because these courses play into the strengths of a typical honors student. A successful online student must be motivated self-starter who is well-organized, and open to new ideas—a familiar description of an honors student. I found in fact that the honors students in my online course required far less support and maintenance than the two non-honors students in the same course.

But our honors students' course evaluations also point to weaknesses in the online learning experience. Some of the predictable criticisms concerned problems with the technology and course management system. More than anything, however, students complained of a lack of human contact in the online environment. They stated that they wanted to ask the instructor questions face-to-face and to meet other students. Several students even indicated that while they enjoyed the course, they would prefer to take a traditional course and would not take another online course. As one student in a UH400 course put it, "An online course just can't replace the feel of a real classroom. It is easier and more convenient, but I think it should be chosen only when a non-honors classroom is not feasible for the instructor or student."

These student comments point to one of the key questions we must ask about online honors course—do they provide a true honors experience? We must ask if it is possible to create the same vibrant and exhilarating learning experience one

frequently encounters in a successful honors course. Put another way, can the asynchronous online learning environment ever provide the dynamic and interpersonal learning one often finds in a non-honors honors course?

I would answer this question with a qualified "yes." If you intend to teach an online honors course, you must expect to spend much time and energy in developing a course that reflects your honors program mission. It is critical, moreover, that you master your university's course management system. Whether it be WebCT or Blackboard, the best way to accomplish this is to take a training session on the system and then use this training to web-enhance an on-site course. That will allow you to test run the various course tools and help you begin thinking about online learning and teaching.

Once you become comfortable with your course management system, you will want to plan your online course carefully. The key thing to remember is that you will not have the opportunity to explain away ambiguities in your syllabus and assignments during class. Everything will be in writing. More than anything else you will want to strive for clarity in your communications and assignments. You should, in fact, provide a "read me first" statement in your course that anticipates and answers every conceivable nuts and bolts question a student might have, from how to turn in papers to "netiquette."

Fortunately, the course management systems offer a wide array of essential course tools that simplify communication with your students. Several course tools, including the syllabus and calendar, are clearly critical to the success of your course. Both will give you the opportunity to provide extensive details on assignments and due dates. Other course tools, such as

the e-mail system within the course management system, should be used as a way to create a self-contained course. If you allow students to use any e-mail they like, both you and they are much more likely to lose track of assignments.

Other communication tools, like discussion boards and chat rooms, are particularly important in an honors course. The discussion boards allow students to exchange ideas and information in an asynchronous environment. You may, for example, create small groups of students and require them to lead particular discussion threads. Or you may post a weekly question on the assigned topic and require students to respond to your post and two of their classmates' posts. Either strategy compels students to engage with the assigned material on an ongoing basis and to read and reflect on the ideas of other students in the course.

Chat rooms, meanwhile, offer you an opportunity to be in class with the students in real time. You might let students know that he or she will be available in the chat room specific hours during the week. You can also hold "live" discussion sessions with groups of your students. Students might resent chat rooms, however, if you require them to "be in class" at a specific time every week, as many of them signed up anticipating a purely asynchronous environment.

Another useful tool is the student web-page tool. You should require your students to create a mini-web page within your course management system right at the beginning of the course. These student web pages will reveal something about each student's personality and will thus help personalize the course for everyone. They can also serve as a reference point for students

as they engage each other in sometimes friendly and sometimes tense debates on the course material.

In sum, you can create a true honors experience in a well-planned online honors course. Require your honors students to participate regularly and write papers frequently. Keep your honors students engaged in the material throughout the course. Interact continuously with your students in the course. The evidence indicates that both you and your students will benefit immensely from the process.

### References

Kemery, E. R. (2000). "Developing On-Line Collaboration." In *Web-Based Learning and Teaching Technologies* (A. Aggarwal, ed.), Idea Group Publishing, Hershey, PA.

Murphy, K. L., & Collins, M. P. (1997). "Communication Conventions in Instructional Electronic Chats." Paper presented at the Annual Convention of the Educational Research Association, Chicago, March 24-28.

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## NCHC NEWS

The three proposed amendments to the Constitution and Bylaws presented to the membership were approved. Voting occurred by paper ballot mailed to members after the conclusion of the annual business meeting at the 2002 conference. Over 1,100 members were eligible to vote.

**To the Constitution: Article 6, Section 1. Add "Immediate Past President" to the enumerated officers so that the Section will read as follows:**

*The officers of the Council shall be the President, the President-Elect, the Vice President, the Immediate Past President, and the Executive Secretary/Treasurer.*

YES=259

NO=2

**To the Bylaws: [proposed new section] Article 2, Section 5.**

*NCHC shall not enter into any contract that involves more than Ten Thousand Dollars (\$10,000.00) in actual or potential expenditures without first having the contract reviewed by an attorney, appointed by the Interim Operations Board, whose responsibility it is to protect NCHC's interests.*

YES=259

NO=4

**To the Bylaws: [proposed new section] Article 4, Section 7.**

*Actions taken by the Executive Committee shall be by majority vote to approve a motion made and seconded by members of the Executive Committee. No portion of a committee report or recommendation shall be considered adopted as policy by the Executive Committee without a specific motion, second, and vote to adopt that portion of the committee report or recommendation.*

YES=269

NO=3

-from Bob Spurrier, Chair,  
Constitution and Bylaws Committee

## Special Invitation for Your Institution to Participate in the Fall 2003 Nationwide Satellite Seminar Series

### ATTENTION: Honors Programs Directors



The National Collegiate Honors Council and Phi Theta Kappa invite you to register your institution to be your community's downlink site for a series of five C-band/Ku-band satellite conferences. The interactive seminars, which encourage studio and satellite audience participation through Q&A, will focus on the Phi Theta Kappa Honors Study Topic "Dimensions and Directions of Health: Choices in the Maze."

Subscribe by June 20 to receive the lowest subscription rate. For further information, visit the Phi Theta Kappa web site at <http://www.ptk.org/nchcss/>.

### The 2003 Satellite Seminars

#### Will Feature Interactive Discussions With These Leading Experts

##### **America's Health Care System: How Good Is It and How Is It Changing?**

Dr. Arnold Relman is Editor-in-Chief emeritus of the New England Journal of Medicine and Professor emeritus of Medicine and Social Medicine at Harvard Medical School. During his 30-year research career, he published numerous original papers and edited two volumes of Controversy in Internal Medicine. He has also written widely on the economic, ethical, legal and social aspects of health care.

Dr. Relman will speak on Tuesday, September 30, 2003, 7:30-8:30 pm, EDT.

##### **The Ethical Frontiers of Biomedicine**

Dr. Vicki Lachman is founder and Director of V.L. Associates, which provides consultation, training and coaching services to nursing officers and health care organizations. Her educational background includes Psychiatric Nursing, Bioethics, and Organizational Development. She has published hundreds of articles, and her forthcoming book *Conversations on Ethics in Nursing* is scheduled for release in 2004.

Dr. Lachman will speak on Tuesday, October 14, 2003, 7:30-8:30 pm, EDT.

##### **Keeping Our Promises: Improving Care at the End of Life**

Clinical ethicist Dr. Diann Uustal is founder and President of an educational consulting firm, Educational Resources in HealthCare, Inc. She is widely regarded for her insightful workshops on health care ethics, professional caregiver issues and values education. She has published numerous articles, co-edited two books and authored four books. She also served as a major consultant for the award winning Concept Media film series on Ethics, Values and Health Care.

Dr. Uustal will speak on Tuesday, October 28, 2003, 7:30-8:30 pm, EST.

##### **The Sociological Barriers to Health Care**

Dr. Wayne Giles is Associate Director for Science and Chief of the Emerging Investigations and Analytic Methods Branch of the Adult and Community Health Division of the National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, CDC. Having published numerous articles and several book chapters, he currently oversees research activities in many areas including health care utilization and racial and ethnic disparities in health.

Dr. Giles will speak on Tuesday, November 4, 2003, 7:30-8:30 pm, EST.

### Heads vs. Feds: The Great Debate

Steven Hager and Robert Stutman will debate the highly contested issue of legalizing marijuana. Following the debate, Dr. Billy Martin will offer a non-biased scientific perspective on the use of marijuana. The debate will likely fuel heated conversation of this timely issue. Hager, Editor-in-Chief of *High Times Magazine*, works to establish the counterculture as a legitimate minority group. Stutman made a 25-year career as one of the country's highest profile DEA agents, responsible for more than 15,000 arrests. Dr. Billy Martin is Professor and Chairman of the Department of Pharmacology and Toxicology at Virginia Commonwealth University.

Hager, Stutman and Martin will debate on November 18, 2003, 7:30-9:00pm, EST.

*"All three professors involved with the Satellite Seminars have responded positively about the experience...the wealth of preparatory materials...and the quality of the telecasts.... All three expressed interest in future seminars. Perhaps the most positive comment came from one of the students who was excited because two of her questions were addressed during the national forum. Student awareness of their role in a national forum on critical issues helps them expand their self-assigned value of the educational process."*

**-Dr. David Bennett**, Director, Honors Program, Missouri Western State College, MO.

*"The combination of interactive participation and highly informative and engaging speakers made the Satellite Seminars a unique and valuable experience for our members."*

**-Amber Davids**, Chapter President, College of DuPage, IL.

*"Our chapter has really enjoyed participating in the satellite seminars. We made the seminars an occasion and had a great time learning with the high school honor students we invited to these events."*

**-Ginny Laubhan**, Tyler Junior College, TX.

*"The discussion sessions after each seminar got better and better because an increasing number of students, instructors and community members heard about the provocative topics and quality information covered in the seminar presentations. Several Health, Nursing, and Psychology instructors used videotapes in their classes. Keep up the good work, Phi Theta Kappa!"*

**-Norman Bates**, Honors Director, Cochise College, AZ.

**To find out more about this exciting and engaging Satellite Seminar Series and for subscription information, go to the Satellite Seminar website at [www.ptk.org/nchcss/](http://www.ptk.org/nchcss/)**



## About *The National Honors Report*

The NCHC's former chair of research, Guy Sedlack, discovered that almost 90% of current directors, faculty, students, and administrators have never written anything about honors. Contributing to *The National Honors Report* is a good way to begin. We are especially interested in the nuts and bolts of undergraduate honors education: recruitment of honors students, retention, peer mentoring, grading policies, program requirements, differences in honors/non-honors students, staffing needs, honors space, term limits for directors, and the list goes on.

The honors listserv ([HONORS@HERMES.GWU.EDU](mailto:HONORS@HERMES.GWU.EDU)) has proven to be a valuable resource for those in honors who need a quick answer, a quick reference. The listserv is also the best place to announce dates for city, state or regional honors council conferences, deadlines for internships, conference proposals, major scholarship deadlines. Dialogue over the listserv has put honors directors in touch with other honors directors struggling with similar problems. The *NHR*, however, provides those in honors the opportunity to share extended, carefully thought-out suggestions to many issues raised on the listserv: the creation of a new program, the management of an existing one, an honors program's unexpected growth (or decline), the changeover from a program to a college, or a needed rejuvenation.

Every other year, the Winter issue of the *NHR* publishes a special classics issue that pulls together many articles from the past that those in honors may have missed. The other issues are open to a variety of topics—no specific themes for any issue. There is no minimum or maximum word limit; on one occasion, a three-part article was published across three consecutive issues. We cannot publish honors theses.

**Deadlines for this quarterly are May 10, July 10, November 10 & February 10. Email works (mostly). Pictures can be sent jpeg. Program logos and school logos are welcome additions. Contact the editor, Margaret Brown, Editor, 100 Village Del Prado Way, St. Augustine, FL 32080; email: [honors-editor@excite.com](mailto:honors-editor@excite.com).**

# AND THE BUSINESS OF HONORS

*The following report by the ad hoc Committee on Headquarters Site was given to the Executive Committee at its meeting at the annual conference in Salt Lake City. This committee was charged to determine the costs of office space and equipment for a national headquarters for NCHC. If any NCHC members have recommendations for potential sites for a national office for NCHC, they should contact the committee chair, Ricki Shine, at [rshine@buffalo.edu](mailto:rshine@buffalo.edu) or (716) 645-5836.*

## Report of the *Ad Hoc* Committee on Headquarters Site October 30, 2002

### OFFICE SPACE

The committee was presented with three proposals for office space at the Executive Committee's Mid-year Meeting in Santa Fe. These proposals were from the **University of Nebraska/Lincoln**, **Arizona State University**, and Gayle Barksdale and Liz Cassell in **Radford, Virginia**.

In Santa Fe, the Executive Committee discussed criteria for a potential site including ease and cost of travel, positive visibility, independence, proximity to NCHC institutions, desirability of location to potential Executive Directors, and availability and cost of support staff.

At the beginning of July and again in early September, this committee put out a call for ideas for potential sites on the NCHC listserv. There was a very positive response. NCHC member institutions **Gallaudet University**, **University of Maryland Baltimore County**, and **Texas A&M University** each expressed a desire to submit a proposal. A list of criteria based upon the proposals already received was sent to each of these universities. In the end, **UMBC** did not submit a proposal because of budget issues. **TAMU** and **Gallaudet** submitted proposals.

In addition, a number of members suggested research parks as potential site locations. Members of this committee were assigned to gather information from each of these parks. For the sake of comparison, we each inquired about leasing 2500 square feet of space:

**Research Triangle Park**, North Carolina: A number of members suggested this location. Jack White contacted the Executive Director of the Park. In short, we are too small for this facility. The possibility remains that we could sublet space from an existing tenant, but we would have to locate such a tenant ourselves.

**McClellan, Alabama**: This new research park, about 90 miles west of Atlanta, is being developed on the grounds of the former McClellan Air Force Base. Jacci Rodgers has not been able to make contact with the developers.

**North Carolina State University's Centennial Campus**, Raleigh, North Carolina: John Zubizarreta contacted Bob Geolas, the Executive Director of the Campus received a packet of information regarding the facilities. Rent at Centennial Campus runs about \$22 a square foot.

**Tampa, Florida**: Stuart Silverman at the University of South Florida suggested a research park in Tampa that is not affiliated with the USF. Lydia Daniel is compiling information on this site.

**University Heights Science Park**, Newark, New Jersey: David Reibstein at the New Jersey Institute of Technology suggested this park. Ricki Shine spoke with Jeanette Brummell the Executive Director of the Park. This park is part of a revitalization program in Newark. It is across the street but not affiliated with NJIT. It is continually growing

as they rehabilitate buildings. It is home to a consortium of New Jersey institutions of higher education, charitable organizations, and research institutes. Rent currently ranges from \$12 to \$16 a square foot.


### EQUIPMENT

Three members of this committee were charged with pricing office equipment. We anticipate needing the following equipment at start-up: two computers with software; one laser printer; one scanner; one fax machine; one copy machine; two desks and desk chairs; three or four guest chairs; book shelves; four five-drawer file cabinets; paper shredder; telephone system; internet access; and miscellaneous office/kitchen equipment. We estimate the cost to be approximately \$10,000.

### FURTHER CHARGE

This report was submitted to the Executive Committee at its meeting at the annual conference in Salt Lake City. After discussion, this committee was charged with gathering further information about the potential sites and making a final recommendation at the Executive Committee's Mid-Year Meeting in Jackson, Mississippi.

### Respectfully submitted, Ricki Shine, Chair

With committee members, Lydia Daniel, Michael Gale, Tolulope Olowomeye, Jacci Rodgers, Charlie Slavin, Jack White, and John Zubizarreta. 

**National Collegiate Honors Council  
Annual Business Meeting Minutes (DRAFT)  
Salt Lake City, Utah  
Saturday, November 2, 2002**

**I. Opening Remarks** by Rosalie Otero

**II. Agenda Approved** as amended.

**III. Approval of the 2001 meeting minutes** from *NHR*

**IV. No Conference Announcements**

**V. New Business**

**A. Discussion of Executive Director**

1. Two reasons for ED: to handle growth of NCHC, and provide new directions.
2. Majority of the Executive Committee believe position to be essential, need for permanence.
3. Set up two Ad Hoc committees to check into options.

**B. Discussion of Permanent Headquarters**

1. Two reasons: centralized communication and increased partnership with others.
2. Because of volunteer nature of the organization, many of us do not have the time to contribute but in order for the NCHC to be successful, everyone must contribute.

**C. Discussion of Dues Increase**

1. Raising dues would affect all members equally. Size of an institution does not necessarily indicate its budget.
2. Everyone must contribute in order to solve current financial difficulties. Money has been taken from conference surpluses for the past two years to cover normal operating expenses.
3. Question becomes when to raise dues, not should we.
4. Looking at past raises, membership seems to increase, not decrease after a dues increase.

5. If institutional dues increase to \$355, membership would cost approximately one dollar per day.
6. Dues are not being raised to cover the possibility of an ED; we need the money to cover operating expenses that have been cut for the past several years.
7. No motion right now, only support; next spring, there will be a proposed amendment to the constitution to raise dues.
8. Please talk to your colleagues and pass on any ideas.

**D. Lifetime Membership**

1. Congratulations to Hew Joiner, NCHC's newest Lifetime Member.

**VI. EST Report**

- A. Report given.
- B. No questions.

**VII. 2003 Conference in Chicago**

- A. Will be held November 5-9, 2003 at the Palmer House Hilton in Chicago.
- B. Conference fees have been approved at \$250, with most meals included.
- C. There have been 22 entries for the conference logo (most ever).
  1. Winner is Holly Hitt from University of Mississippi
- D. There will be continued discussion of the ED position, permanent office, and the dues increase at this conference.

**VIII. NCHC Portz Grant Awards**

- A. Submission Dates
  1. Two dates (instead of four in the past): March 15, 2003, and September 15, 2003.
  2. There have been 13 proposals; we have been able to fund six.
  3. Thanks to Earl and Gayle for all of their hard work!

**IX. Committee Reports**

**A. Constitution Bylaws**

1. Next year's proposed changes announced, likely to be a controversial vote.

**B. Honors Semesters**

1. List of institutions sending students quite long.
2. Faculty institutes (co-sponsors them).
3. Looking for students with wit, energy, and desire for independence.
4. April 2003, City as Text off Georgia Coast. Fall - Seattle.
5. No Honors Semesters this year; funds collecting interest.
6. Upcoming Faculty Institute in foreign study.
7. Regionals support Honors Semesters with money for student scholarships.

**C. Nominating Committee**

(published in Fall 2002 *NHR*)

1. Slate announced on agenda.
2. Nominations from the floor included:
  - a. Professional
    - i. Bruce Carter - Syracuse Univ
    - ii. Tom Sawyer - North Central
    - iii. Cheryl Achterberg - Penn State
    - iv. Theresa James - Southern Florida
  - b. Students
    - i. Ryan McLeod - Claffin University
    - ii. David Duncan - University of Florida

**D. Other Committee Reports**

**X. Old Business** - None

**XI. Other New Business** - None

The Gavel was passed.  
Meeting Adjourned - 3:45 p.m.  
Submitted by Earl Brown, Jr.  
Executive Secretary/Treasurer

*ndo*



## National Collegiate Honors Council Executive Committee Meeting Salt Lake City, October 30, November 3, 2002 (DRAFT)

Present: Rosalie Otero (presiding), Brian Adler, Elizabeth Beck, Ron Brandolini, Kate Bruce, Celeste Campbell, Ashley Carlson, Larry Clark, Adam D'Antonio, Michael Gale, Hew Joiner, Donzell Lee, Jack Rhodes, Jon Schlenker, Ricki Shine, Shirley Forbes Thomas, Natalia Valenzuela, Norm Weiner, John Zubizarreta, Earl Brown, Jr.

Guests: Rita Barnes, Bernice Braid, Margaret Brown (*ex officio*), Bruce Carter, Finnie Coleman, Joan Digby, Lynne Goodstein, John Grady, Maggie Hill, Ada Long (*ex officio*), Virginia McCombs, Bob McDonough, Donna Menis, Jeff Portnoy, Alison Primoza, Mary Ann Raatz, Tom Sawyer, Charlie Slavin, Bob Spurrier (Parliamentarian), Trevor Tebbs.

### I. Announcements:

- A.) All motions must be submitted in writing and read before any vote is taken.
- B.) Peter Viscusi has been Appointed chair, *ad hoc* Honors College Committee.
- C.) Statement concerning National Scholar Honor Society's table at the Idea Exchange referred to Partnership Committee.
- D.) Phi Theta Kappa invited members of the NCHC to participate in a series of forums: Beyond High School: What's An Education For.
- E.) Donzell Lee announced that the conference had 1350 pre-registrants
- F.) Donzell Lee announced that the Mormon Tabernacle Choir cancelled their Thursday, October 31 rehearsal.
- G.) Rita Barnes asked members of the Executive Committee to fill out a marketability study on Honors Program handbooks.

### II. Additions to Agenda

IV. Site Consideration Conference Call with Julie Ann Maasen  
VII C. National Honors Peace and Human Rights Conference--  
-Goodstein

### III. The Minutes of the June 2002 Executive Committee meeting in Santa Fe APPROVED.

### IV. Site Consideration Conference call with Julie Ann Maasen, our 2004 convention manager.

She recommended several sites and had bids for four of them.

**Motion:** Conference 2005 at the Renaissance Grand Hotel in St. Louis, Conference 2006 at the Sheraton Hotel in Boston, and 2007 at a western site to be determined, with 2008 possibly a return to New Orleans. AP-PROVED.

2003 Chicago Palmer House

November 5 - November 9

2004 New Orleans Hyatt

Regency November 10 -

November 14.

2005 St. Louis Renaissance

Grand Hotel October 26-30

2006 Boston Sheraton dates to

be determined

2007 western site and dates to

be determined

2008 New Orleans Hyatt

Regency--depending on success of 2004 conference

### B. Report from *ad hoc* RFP

#### Executive Director Committee

accepted. Committee was asked to refine its report to consider role of Executive Director, office manager or national spokesperson. Revised report will be discussed at Spring 2003 Executive Committee meeting. Rosalie Otero will report to the membership during the Business meeting on these two reports.

### C. Dues increase left on the table

### D. Report from *ad hoc* Nominating Committee accepted.

### VII. New Business

- A. **Motion** to offer Honorary Lifetime Membership for Hew Joiner APPROVED and forwarded to Business Meeting for membership action.
- B. **Motion** to give Gayle Barksdale and Liz Cassell each a \$1,000 bonus. APPROVED.
- C. **Motion** to send request for NCHC to partner with the University of Connecticut in sponsoring National Honors Peace and Human Rights Conference to External Relations and Partnership Committees to create guidelines for such partnerships. APPROVED. The Executive Committee felt that it was not yet ready to entertain such proposals.

### VI Old Business

- A. **Report from *ad hoc* Headquarters Committee.** Ricki Shine discussed list of possible sites. She would pursue the matter further. On Sunday Ricki reported that Gallaudet would require minimum rental, University of Nebraska, Lincoln is willing to expand its offer of office space, and Texas A & M will make a proposal. Report accepted.

**VIII. President's Report**

Rosalie Otero stated that the NCHC has hired a convention manager to manage the 2004 Conference, Julie Ann Maasen of Maasen and Associates. She also discussed the structural future of the organization.

**IX. Executive Secretary/  
Treasurer's Report**

**Motion:** To offer Complimentary memberships for 2003 to the following individuals or organizations-Phi Beta Kappa (Executive Director), National Endowment for the Humanities (James Herbert), Convention Management Services (Mary Bradford), National Science Foundation (Herbert Levitan), Phi Theta Kappa (Billy Wilson), Kettering Foundation (Maxine Thomas), Association of College Honors Societies (Dorothy Mitsifer), and Phi Kappa Phi (Perry Snyder).  
APPROVED.  
EST Report accepted.

**X. New Business**

**A. Ad Hoc Committee reports.** All *ad hoc* committees, their chairs and current members, except for Mid-Sized University, have been reappointed for 2003.

**1. Ad hoc Articulation** -- no report

**2. Ad hoc Honors College** - no report

**3. Ad hoc Mid-Sized Universities** - no report

**4. Ad hoc Partnerships**

**Motion:** Hew Joiner will continue as NCHC representative to Phi Theta Kappa through 2004 and will groom someone to succeed him. APPROVED.  
Ricki Shine discussed recent meeting with National Association of College Admission Counseling (NACAC). NCHC has been invited to do a panel

presentation at the NACAC Conference in 2003. Joan Digby published an article on NCHC in the October issue of the *NACAC Bulletin*. In addition the NCHC will advertise the third edition of the *Peterson's Guide to Honors Programs and Colleges* in the three fall issues of the *NACAC Bulletin*. The Executive Committee recommended that Joan Digby serve as liaison to NACAC.

The committee was asked to create guidelines/template for establishing partnerships. The Executive Committee also discussed if this *ad hoc* committee should be a standing committee or a subcommittee of External Relations. No decision was reached. The Executive Committee also inquired about the state of the Alliance for Liberal Education with Phi Beta Kappa's withdrawal from the Alliance. The current members of the Alliance are Phi Theta Kappa, National Honors Society (NHS) and the NCHC.

**5. Ad hoc Conference 2003  
Planning Committee**

Norm Weiner announced that the committee had received 25 entries for the logo contest; that Senator Paul Simon of Illinois will be one of the speakers.

**Motion:** To set the 2003 conference registration fee at \$250.  
APPROVED.

**B. Other Committee Reports**

**1. Satellite Seminar topic for 2004** - no report

**2. Constitution and ByLaws**

**Motion:** Standing Order Art XI, [new] section H: Honorary Lifetime Members of NCHC receive free registration at the NCHC national conference and also receive all institutional mailings. APPROVED

**Motion:** Standing Order Art XI, [new] section I: All retired affiliate members may attend the NCHC national conference at guest registration rates.  
APPROVED.

Committee was asked to draft new language for Constitutional language for Executive Director position and changes that would result from such a change.

**3. Honors Evaluation Committee**

a. Committee would like to hold faculty institute to focus on Frank Shushock's dissertation on assessment-the NCHC gave Frank \$1500 in 2000 to support his work.

b. Committee requests that the NCHC headquarters put list of site consultants on webpage.

c. NCHC headquarters needs to ask all site consultants what sites they have visited in last year.

d. Request of Evaluation Committee for NCHC to partially fund institutes and to continue to pay for honoraria (see motion in minutes of meeting held in Washington, DC October 2000) for facilitators has been referred to External Relations Committee to find sponsors.

e. Evaluation Committee is willing to facilitate workshop on assessment at 2003 Conference in Chicago and to hold another institute on the west coast(?) in 2004. Members have expressed interest in an institute/mini-institute that focuses on self-study.

f. The Evaluation Committee requested a schematic to show what the NCHC does for its members and what percentage of the cost each represents.

g. The committee asked if the Executive Committee would be interested in having John Grady pursue discussion with Bill Sullivan of the Carnegie Institute about their doing an honors education survey. The Executive Committee asked John to pursue this.

### 3. Research Committee

Tom Sawyer reported on survey done to learn why some members did not choose to submit materials for the third edition of the *Peterson's Guide*. The committee's report will appear in the Spring 2003 issue of the *National Honors Report*. One suggestion that came out of the ensuing discussion was to have requests for information go to VPAA/Provost and Admissions Officers as well as Honors Director/Dean.

### 4. Portz Fund & Grants Committee

a. Portz Fund asked for clarification concerning unspent monies. They were told that any unspent monies would remain in their account for use in 2003.

b. **Motion:** To allocate \$2500 to the Portz Fund and \$2500 to the Honors Semesters Committee from the Conference 2000 surplus to maintain the current level of funding by the NCHC. TABLED

c. Committee announced that the deadline for Portz Scholar proposals will be June 1, 2003.

d. The committee requested that the Conference 2003 Planning Committee try to schedule fewer sessions opposite the Portz Scholars Presentations to encourage attendance. The matter was referred to the Conference 2003 Planning Committee.

## XII Announcements

### A. Spring Executive Committee

will be held either mid to late May or June in Jackson, MS. Phi Theta Kappa has agreed to allow us to use their facilities.

### B. Honors Semesters Committee

will meet June 5-8 in Indianapolis

### C. The Finance Committee

will meet with the NE-NCHC in Gettysburg, PA Mar 27-30

## XIII Old Business

### A. Report on 2002 Conference-

Donzell Lee

1. 1450 people attended/ budgeted attendance 1300
2. The guest room pick-ups met at least minimum contractual agreement
3. Evaluations commented on the small size of some of the meeting rooms.
4. More people went to Park City than planned; made \$1100
5. Cost for ADA would have been \$20,000; Donzell spoke with Gallaudet who cut down on number of different sessions reducing costs to \$7,500

### B. Donor Forms-Ricki Shine

Donor forms have been shown to our lawyer. They will be forwarded to External Relations Committee in order to look for individuals willing to contribute to NCHC.

### C. Motion:

to appoint Kathleen Kardaras as NCHC liaison to the Association for the Gifted as recommended by the Pre-College Gifted Committee. DEFEATED.

## XIV New Business

### A. President Lee's goals for the

2003: He believes that the NCHC is at a serious cross-roads. He sees his role as stabilizing the ship on two fronts: Organizational direction and finances. A more complete statement of these goals will appear in the Spring 2003 issue of the *National Honors Report*.

### B. Donzell Lee will ask Shirley Forbes Thomas to write grants for the NCHC

### C. Maggie Brown, Editor of the *National Honors Report*, asked for a series of articles between now and the fall on the following topics: raising dues, executive director, and a national office in order to insure that the membership is aware of the issues before they vote on these matters in 2003. Rosalie Otero and Brian Adler agreed to write on an Executive Director, Adam D'Antonio will write on a national headquarters, and Maggie will ask Jacci Rodgers and Gary Bell to write about raising dues.

Meeting adjourned at 11:22 AM

ncb

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## Interested in joining the NCHC?

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Please use the application below to apply for membership.  
Mail your payment with the application to:

Elizabeth Beck, Executive Secretary/Treasurer  
National Collegiate Honors Council  
Iowa State University  
2130 Jischke Honors Building  
Ames, IA 50011-1150  
nchc@iastate.edu

Questions? Please call us at (515) 294-9188 or fax us at (515) 294-2970.

## *MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION*

I wish to apply for the following membership (check one):

- ☐ Student (\$35)
- ☐ Institutional (\$250)
- ☐ Faculty from member institution (\$50)
- ☐ Faculty from non-member institution (\$125)
- ☐ Affiliate Member (\$50)

I enclose \$\_\_\_\_\_ in payment of a one-year membership.

Name (print or type)\_\_\_\_\_

Title\_\_\_\_\_

Institution\_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address\_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ Fax \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_



# **We've Moved!**

**Please note that the  
NCHC Headquarters Office  
has moved!**

Any questions regarding NCHC business should be addressed to the new NCHC Executive Secretary/Treasurer, Elizabeth Beck, at the following address:

NCHC  
Iowa State University  
2130 Jischke Honors Building  
Ames, IA 50011-1150  
Phone: (515) 294-9188  
Fax: (515) 294-2970  
Email: [nchc@iastate.edu](mailto:nchc@iastate.edu)  
Web: [nchchonors.org](http://nchchonors.org)



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